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95

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32 pages of tutorials inside!

Depict a heavy duty battle scene

Carlos Cabrera leads you a in step-by-step guide to creating a believable battle scene with easy-to-follow Photoshop techniques

Paint epic cities

YongSub Noh shares advice and techniques on how to concept and create a fantasy industrial building in Photoshop

Learn character painting techniques

Create matter-mutating character concepts with Christopher Peters, from thumbnails, material studies through to texturing and lighting

Sketching inspiration: Wojciech Ostrycharz

With clients such as Ubisoft and Warner Bro's this sketchbook boasts a diverse range of characters, environments and a whole host of other game-based content

Create texture and paint materials

Romanov Pavel shares advice and the techniques he used to paint materials on his character concept, Warrior of Valhalla

plus

- 10 of the best digital artworks
- **Speed paint fantasy scenes** Disney Interactive's Sam Nielson
- + much more!

LEGEND OF THE CRYPTIDS

This Month's cover image was created by Romanov Pavel for Applibots ever popular Legend of the Cryptids.

Legend of the Cryptids (LOC) is a high quality card battle RPG. It is a fantasy-based game filled with legendary monsters, mythical gods, heroes, magicians, artifacts and other creatures.

Located in Tokyo, Applibot Inc provides a variety of services in the field of social gaming. Their business philosophy centers on providing services that people around the world love and appreciate. Some of their projects include Legend of the Cryptids, Chaos Drive and Gang Road.

If you want to find out the techniques Romanov used to create his image go to **page 094** to read his Project Overview of Valhalla Warrior!

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Editor's Letter

JESS SERJENT-TIPPING
Deputy Editor

Welcome to the November 2013 issue of *2dartist* magazine!

If losing yourself in imaginary worlds is your thing, then look no further than this month's issue, packed with original character concepts, an epic battle scene and fantasy landscapes to really get you inspired!

This month's striking cover image was created by Romanov Pavel for Applibot's ever growing card game, *Legend of the Cryptids*. If you want to discover the techniques Romanov used to create this piece then head over to page 94, where he shares all in his Project Overview!

We also talk inspiration, techniques and breaking into to the industry with Disney Interactive concept artist, Sam Nielson. Enjoy!

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Contributors

SAM NIELSON
Sam has worked on game and toy concepts for Disney Infinity and teaches at Brigham Young University and Schoolism.com. His clients include Harper Collins, Scholastic and Blizzard Entertainment.

CARLOS CABRERA
Carlos Cabrera is a professional concept artist and indie video game developer. He recently launched *Cypher*, an immersive visual text adventure. He also creates work for Applibot.
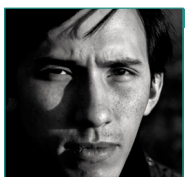
DEVON CADY-LEE
Devon Cady-Lee is a concept artist and illustrator working contract and full time in the entertainment industry since 2006. His primary work is on games, though he has also worked in effects and film studios.

BYZWA DHER
Byzwa Dher is from Slovakia and currently works as a freelance digital artist. His main focus is concept art and illustration for characters and environment within the game and movie industries.

ROMANOV PAVEL
Romanov Pavel has worked at Wargaming.net as a texture artist, and has since worked as a freelancer on games such as *Legend of the Cryptids, Impact of Gods*, and *Legends of Eisenwald*.
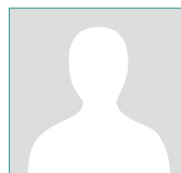
CHRISTOPHER PETERS
Christopher Peters is a young artist who has dedicated his life to music, history and digital art, among other things. He defines his art as controlled chaos and considers himself an eternal student.

YONGSUB NOH
YongSub Noh is a self-taught, 3D animation artist from South Korea. He currently works for NCsoft and enjoys playing PC games, the drums and working on concept art in his spare time.
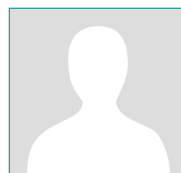
WOJCIECH OSTRYCHARZ
Wojciech Ostrycharz is a designer, concept artist and illustrator for game developer Techland. He designs characters and environments and has worked on productions for Ubisoft, Deep Silver and Warner Bros.
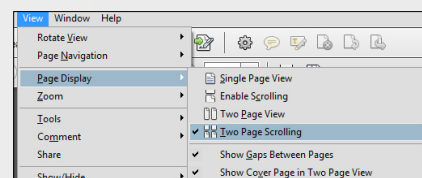
Your Magazine.

Get the most out of it!

If you're having problems viewing the double-page spreads that we feature within this magazine, then follow this handy little guide on how to set up your PDF reader!

Top tips for viewing

For optimum viewing of the magazine, it is recommended that you have the latest version of Adobe Acrobat Reader installed. You can download it for free here: **DOWNLOAD**

To view the many double-page spreads featured in 2dartist magazine, you can set the reader to display "two-up", which will show double-page spreads as one large landscape image:

1. Open the magazine in Reader;
2. Go to the **View** menu, then **Page Display**;
3. Select **Two Page Scrolling**, making sure that **Show Cover Page in Two Page View** is also selected.

Jump to articles

In the Contents pages, we have direct links to all articles within the magazine. If a certain article catches your eye, simply click (or tap on handheld devices) on the page number within the Contents, and you will be taken straight to that article.

Download resources

Whenever you see this symbol, be sure to click it to download <u>free</u> resources to accompany that article!

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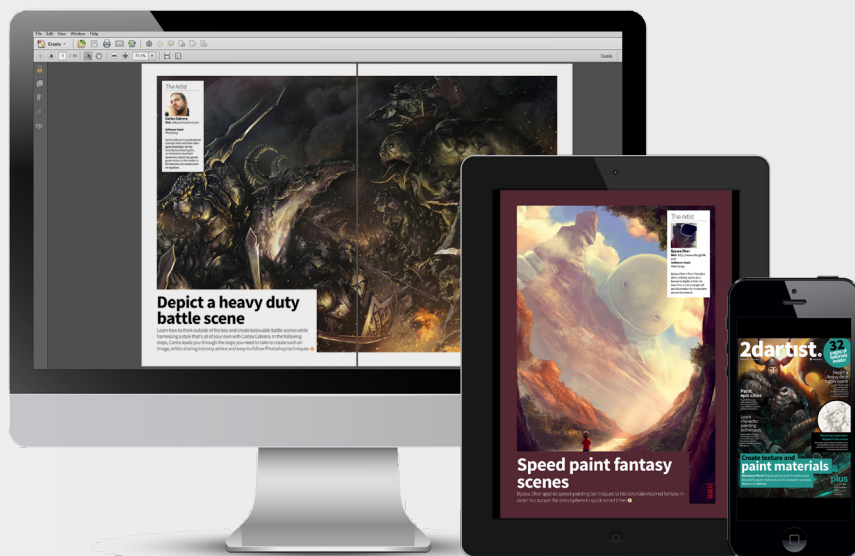
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Disney Interactive's Sam Nielsen

Disney Interactive concept artist, Sam Nielson chats to *2dartist* about his journey into the industry, the appeal of the digital tool and his inspirations, whilst sharing some industry advice! ▶

The Artist

Sam Nielsen
Web: artsammich.blogspot.com

Interviewed by:
Jess Serjent-Tipping

Sam has recently worked on game and toy concepts for Disney Infinity and also teaches at Brigham Young University. He has also taught classes at **Schoolism. com** and holds occasional art workshops. His clients include Harper Collins, Scholastic, and Blizzard Entertainment.

From his first forays into the world of game art with his older brother, at the tender age of 16, Sam Nielson has gone on to become one of the top artists at Disney Interactive Studios, and now trains great young creative minds at Brigham Young University.

Inspired by the pixel-painting and anti-aliasing of the Nintendo era, Sam began to develop an interest in digital art software. Years later, he encountered Painter and Photoshop and began to really focus on the rendering techniques, learn traditional art techniques and work his way up through to the prestigious position he now holds.

We chat to Sam about his fascinating journey as he divulges a few useful tips and pointers about the industry along the way...

2dartist: How did you get into the industry and land a job at Avalanche software/Disney Interactive Studios?

Sam Nielsen: When I was young, my older brother and I started making games together. He did most of the work, but I helped out with the art. In 1994, I submitted a game we'd recently finished as a portfolio piece to a small game studio called Saffire.

I was 16 years old and I don't think they found the art very impressive, but they were impressed that we had made a playable game at such young ages, so they decided to give me a chance. The artists that worked there were incredibly generous with their knowledge and they taught me how to be a passable artist. In 2004 I was hired by Avalanche Software. About a year after I started there, the studio was bought by Disney.

2da: What was it about digital tools that made you want to pursue a career in the industry?

SN: I started in the era of the Super Nintendo, and I was fascinated by what you could accomplish with pixels. My first job was to pixel-by-pixel anti-alias the spokes on a motorcycle drawn by another artist, and I thought I had the coolest job in the world.

Years later, when I saw artists using Photoshop and Painter for the first time, I was excited at how the complicated task of rendering form and detail could be so quickly accomplished using those tools. Painter interested me the most because it seemed so organic compared to the tools I was used to. I was only later trained as a traditional artist and found ways to reverse-engineer that knowledge to the digital tools. ▶

● Sam never lets the fact that an idea that has been done to death by others dissuade him from trying it out himself

● Sam loves everything about fall, so he tries to do a tribute to the season each year

"If possible, I never start drawing until I am inspired by a task"

2da: Can you talk us through what a normal day is like in the studio?

SN: I've been assigned to concoct a daily exercise for our concept team, so the first thing I do when I get into work is look for some inspirational image or a design warm-up task.

Once I've done my own take on the exercise, I get an assignment from our department head, Sebastien Gallego. Most tasks require extra information, so I'll go to the other teams involved in that concept and gather what I can. I ask them for requirements and limitations, but what I'm really looking for is a leaping off point, something that captures my imagination or inspires an interesting juxtaposition of ideas for the concept.

Sometimes a task is automatically interesting, but most of the time it's just a box of creativity-crushing, pre-defined rules, so I look for that interesting toehold; but sometimes I have to push back against the rules when I don't see a way to make the thing interesting. This can be tricky because nobody wants to hear that their idea is bad, so I have to phrase my concern in terms of the conflict the idea creates, or I sometimes boil their idea down to its essential elements and ask them if I can find another way to solve that problem.

If possible, I never start drawing until I am inspired by a task. That usually means Google searches and visual brainstorming, but on a quick deadline I sometimes have to bounce the idea off other artists and see if they can pull something interesting out of the idea within a short conversation. Our studio is very collaborative, so I get a lot of help from other artists throughout the process, including critiques and draw-overs. The art directors usually review concepts the following morning.

Being a concept artist means that 90% of my images are rejected, but if I don't invest myself emotionally in every piece, it starts to show and my works suffers. So I have to find a balance between a carefree attitude where I enjoy the work for its own sake, and that focused intensity where I care about each piece as though its approval is essential. It's not an easy line to walk.

2da: Could you tell us about your creative process and the software that you use?

Sam confesses he loves pushing against typical expectation of form and proportion, especially when it makes his designs more expressive

Sam thinks that chameleons are such droll creatures, so he chose to make this one leer a bit

● Sam painted this image for a game he pitched. The pitch was rejected, but it's still one of his favorite images

"It seems like I find a new artist to be influenced by every day and I'm positive I couldn't list them all here"

SN: I like to draw, but I don't like drawing when I'm doing concept art. I can't be satisfied with a design until I've addressed the issues of form and color, so I usually start with rough sketches and refine the drawing while I paint it. I used Painter for my digital painting until less than a year ago, when I switched completely over to Photoshop. I miss a few things from Painter, but I had more frustrations while using it than I do now with those few things I miss from it.

2da: You teach an advanced lighting course at Schoolism, where did you learn the science behind this and do you have any tips for artists looking to improve?

SN: I have no academic qualification, just a fascination with all things scientific. I married

into a family of physicists, and my wife insisted that I should go to college, even though I was doing well in my career. Something about my association with her family stuck with me even though I was an animation major, so I devoured anything I could pick up in physics, astronomy and even 3D art classes on how light interacts with different materials.

When Bobby Chiu asked me to teach the Schoolism class, I spent many months collaborating with my brother-in-law, whose doctorate project at Penn State happened to be dealing with light. I also read as many books and scientific journals on the subject as I could find with the goal of making the deepest and most interesting class possible. I'm still finding new knowledge all the time, so it has become a continuous search to understand what is an unexpectedly deep subject.

2da: Where do you draw your influences from?

SN: My early influences were comic artists, but I've really leaned away from those influences in recent years. My more recent roots come from my Avalanche training at the hands of Ryan Wood, Dave McClellan, Todd Harris, Joe Olson and Jon Diesta; with additional inspiration coming from the concept and visual development teams at Disney Feature, Pixar, Dreamworks and Sony Animation. However, it seems like I find a new artist to be influenced by every day and I'm positive I couldn't list them all here.

2da: What has been your favorite project that you have worked on to date?

SN: I loved working on *Chicken Little: Ace in Action*. It wasn't a very prestigious game, but that was what made it great. Nobody seemed to care about the project, so we were left almost completely alone to come up with a game we thought would be fun. I was the lead concept artist so I was able to collaborate closely with our talented team with almost no oversight. All the ▶

Sam likes to use light and surface to make the viewer ask questions or want to know more about a character

Sam thinks that pugs are the strangest dogs, but they are so much fun to draw

Another image from an art challenge with the topic: Bug Warfare

coolest titles I've worked on were a pain to pull off because we had to cater to so many different people just to get anything approved. *Ace in Action* was just pure fun.

2da: Do you have any advice for anyone wanting to start a career in the industry?

SN: Don't get cocky, but don't get discouraged either. The perfect artist is willing to find out exactly where he or she needs to improve, but believes in himself or herself enough to keep trying even when there's so much to learn.

I've known way too many talented artists who get full of themselves and stop looking for ways to get better or stop listening to people who critique their work. And I've also known many artists who just get down on themselves and stop trying. If you're going to make it in a difficult industry, you need to be confident enough in your ability to improve that you will be humble even when you don't want to be.

2da: Can you tell us about any projects you are working on at the moment or what you have coming up in the future?

SN: I can't even show some of the concepts I'm currently working on to my own team, so I definitely can't talk about it yet. Sorry!

2da: Working for a big company such as Avalanche software/Disney Interactive Studios is a dream for a lot of emerging artists, could you give any advice on tailoring portfolios and what these companies are looking for?

SN: Submit art that is similar to what we do. Gore, sex, or pensive expressionism merely tells the art director that deep down you don't want to ▶

● Sam remembers playing hide and seek with his older brother, and thinking that he found such good hiding spots. He thinks his brother may have just been humoring him

work on Disney stuff. We want people who would love to work for Disney and who are comfortable approaching content and style the way we do. Of course we want to see something new, but do something new in a way that suggests you're going to add to our team rather than try to pull us somewhere we don't want to go. Also, while energetic design is a must, construction is still huge. Even cartoony characters need to have weight and structural consistency.

2da: When you aren't working on digital art and concepts, how do you enjoy spending your time?

SN: I have a lot of kids now, so I spend any extra time I have doing things with my family or helping kids with schooling. Outside of art I don't have a very exciting life, but it's a very fulfilling one.

2da: Thanks for taking the time to chat with us today! ●

● Sam tried to imitate Joe Olson's style, but also combine the graphic look of his characters with some dimension

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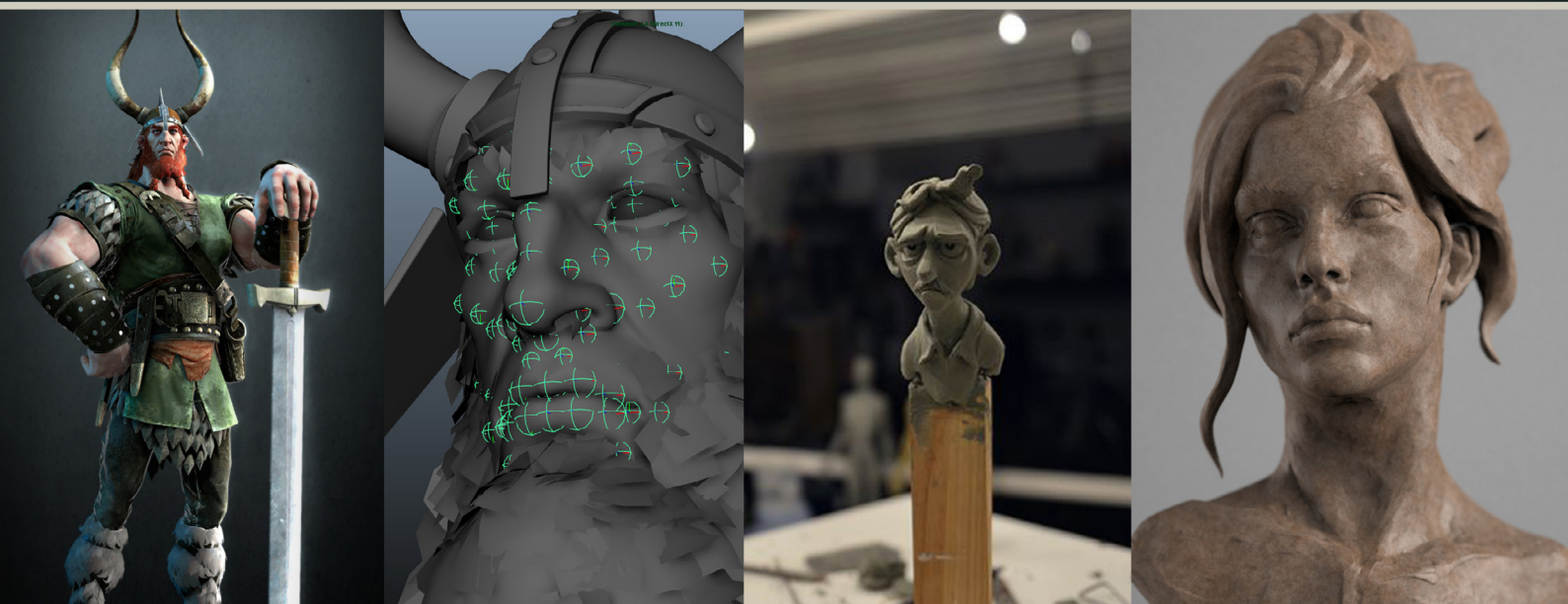
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Art Gallery

Each issue the 2dartist team selects 10 of the best digital images from around the world. Enjoy!

Tree of Life
Ferdinand D. Ladera
http://www.ferdinandladera.com

Morning Arrival
Andreas Rocha
http://www.andreasrocha.com

Being a Concept Artist
Florian de Gesincourt
http://www.dges.fr

Red Dragon
Aekkarat Sumutchaya
https://www.facebook.com/Webang111

The Fall
JP Roldan
http://juanparoldan.blogspot.com/

ROLDAN

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Albert Ramon

https://www.facebook.com/
AlbertRDigitalArtworks

▲ **Freighter #5**
Matt Heath
http://mattheath.com.au

Victor & The Soccer Ball ▼
Rafał Wojtunik
http://www.facebook.com/wojtunik.art

WOJCIECH OSTRYCHARZ

Sketchbook

Wojciech Ostrycharz's sketchbook boasts a diverse range of characters, environments and a whole host of other game-based content. Having worked on big productions for clients such as Ubisoft and Warner Bros, the following pages give a great insight into Wojciech's working world of concept art.

The Artist

Wojciech Ostrycharz
Web: wojciechostrycharz.blogspot.com

Wojciech Ostrycharz is a designer, concept artist and illustrator for game developer Techland. He designs characters and environments, and is a known author of non-commercial short animated movies. He has also worked on productions for companies such as Ubisoft, Deep Silver and Warner Bros. Studios.

Techland artist, Wojciech Ostrycharz, shares a fascinating look into the innermost pages of his creative sketchbook...

To me, sketching is a form of making a note. It's the way I communicate and express my feelings. I always carry a notebook with me in which I sketch new ideas. Every time a new idea pops into my head I just reach out for it and draw. It does not matter whether the sketch is for a big game developer or for my own private purpose.

Before I start to sketch I know what I want to show in the final picture. I work on different projects: westerns, zombie apocalypse or illustrations for Julius Verne's stories. So to hit the spot with my concepts I need to know the ins and outs of the project. I collect facts and interesting information and look for details that stimulate my imagination. Sometimes when my imagination works at full speed I cannot keep up putting all the ideas on paper. This is the most enjoyable moment of the design phase. Technical correctness of drawings is not so essential at the design stage – freedom of creation is far more important.

While working on commercial projects I have to consider my client's vision as well. The expectations may vary from my own vision but it's the most obvious fact that all concept artists have to accept. Sometimes artistic ambition must step aside. I always look for the right balance between commercial and private work. Working on illustrations for my private portfolio allows me to keep a healthy attitude towards my job, and also gives me the opportunity to draw for fun only or to address matters important to me.

Inspiration and ideas

I get my inspiration from different sources. Sometimes I find it while scratching my forehead in front of the laptop or during my vacations while I'm lying on the beach. I always observe the world and all the things happening around me – concept artists never stop working. The process of drawing is actually the last phase of the work.

When I already know what I want to express, I think about materials, techniques and composition. Having a plan in place makes the work much easier. I believe that it's worth spending more time on planning than on the realization of the idea. ▶

---

01 I used 5-point perspective here, which pulls the viewer into the magic world. On the job I'm usually confronted with projects that reflect the real life as much as possible, but in my private sketches I let my imagination run wild.

02 In character design the clarity is priority – the concept must be readable. I broke this rule on purpose. I wanted my concepts to contain crazy, not realistic or contradictory elements that intrigue the viewer e.g. the eyes on feet.

01
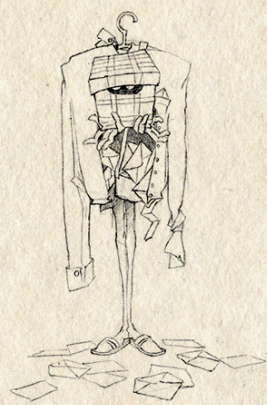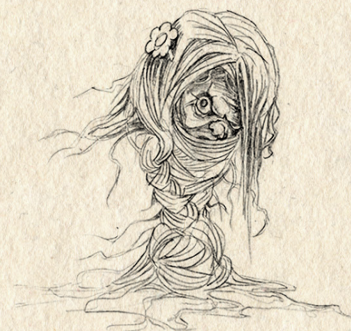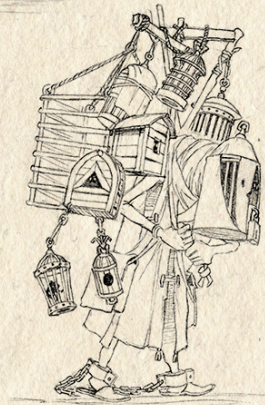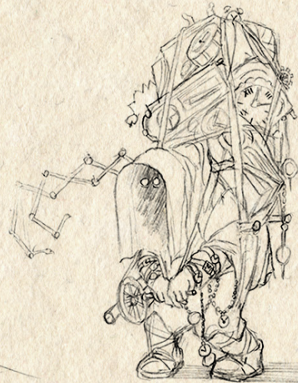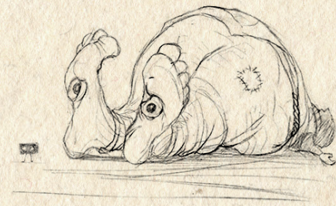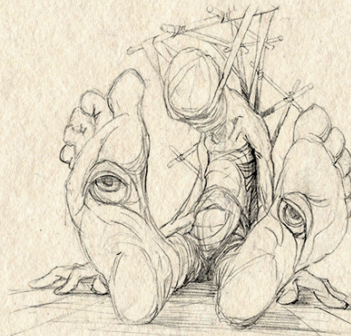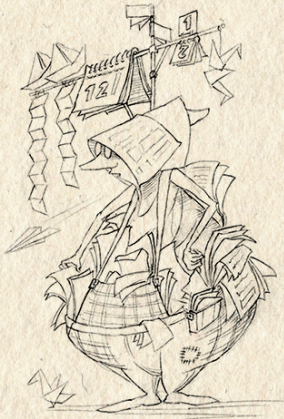
© Wojciech Ostrycharz

Materials

I use sketchbooks and standard printer paper in A4 or A3 format. The format depends on the level of detail. For more detailed artworks or panoramic views I could even put a few paper sheets together. Once or twice, I've also found myself drawing on my colleague's desk. I usually use an automatic pencil 0.5 HB or B, though sometimes I also find myself using fine-liners or markers for my sketches.

My workplace is as important as the materials; it has to be comfy and it must look inviting. I remember some time ago I had to sit on a wooden chair and found myself subconsciously looking for excuses not to sit at my desk. ▶

03 Stories of Silas Graves (main character from *Call of Juarez: Gunslinger*) are taken with a pinch of salt. I gave him a dose of mysticism and gravity that contrast with his wild imagination. A lot of revolvers define him as a bounty hunter and accentuate his tendency to exaggerate.

© Techland

04 Before I start to work on a new project I do quick sketches in which I define characteristic elements like thick seams and hanging leather straps that will influence the style I will choose for the project.

BURNED
GENTLEMAN

16-10-2011

04

41

© Wojciech Ostrycharz

16-10-2011

Sketching techniques

Depending on the project and the atmosphere I want to show, I may look to use different techniques. Usually, when I design environments for example, I look for intersection points, horizon lines and main surfaces. In more urbanized locations with richer architecture I focus on blocks first. Their shapes may significantly impact the final illumination of the scene and the overall impression.

When designing characters, I start with curves that support the entire composition. They can help me to picture the nature of a character and expressing the emotions I intend to show. Sometimes a simple standing position may be dynamic and can illustrate a lot of energy.
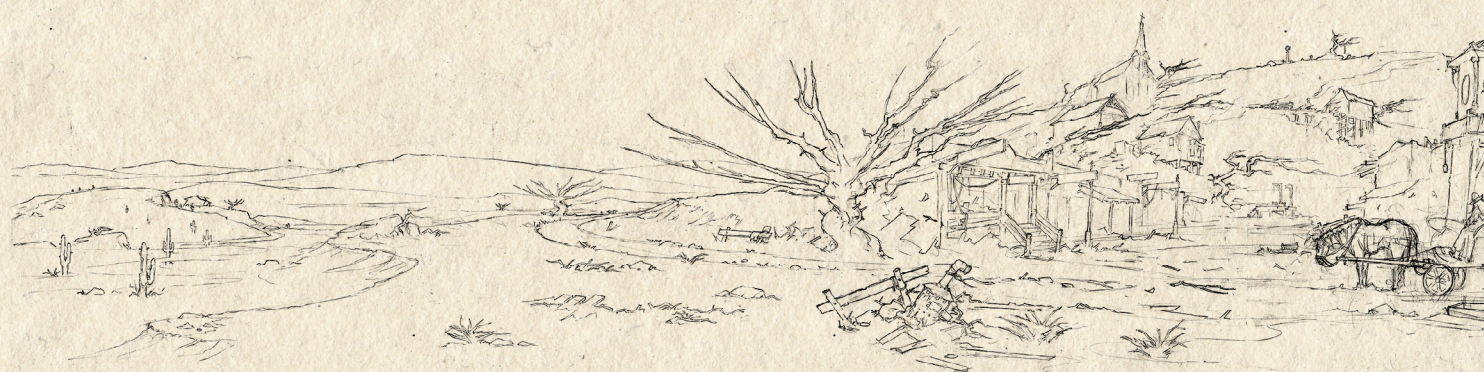
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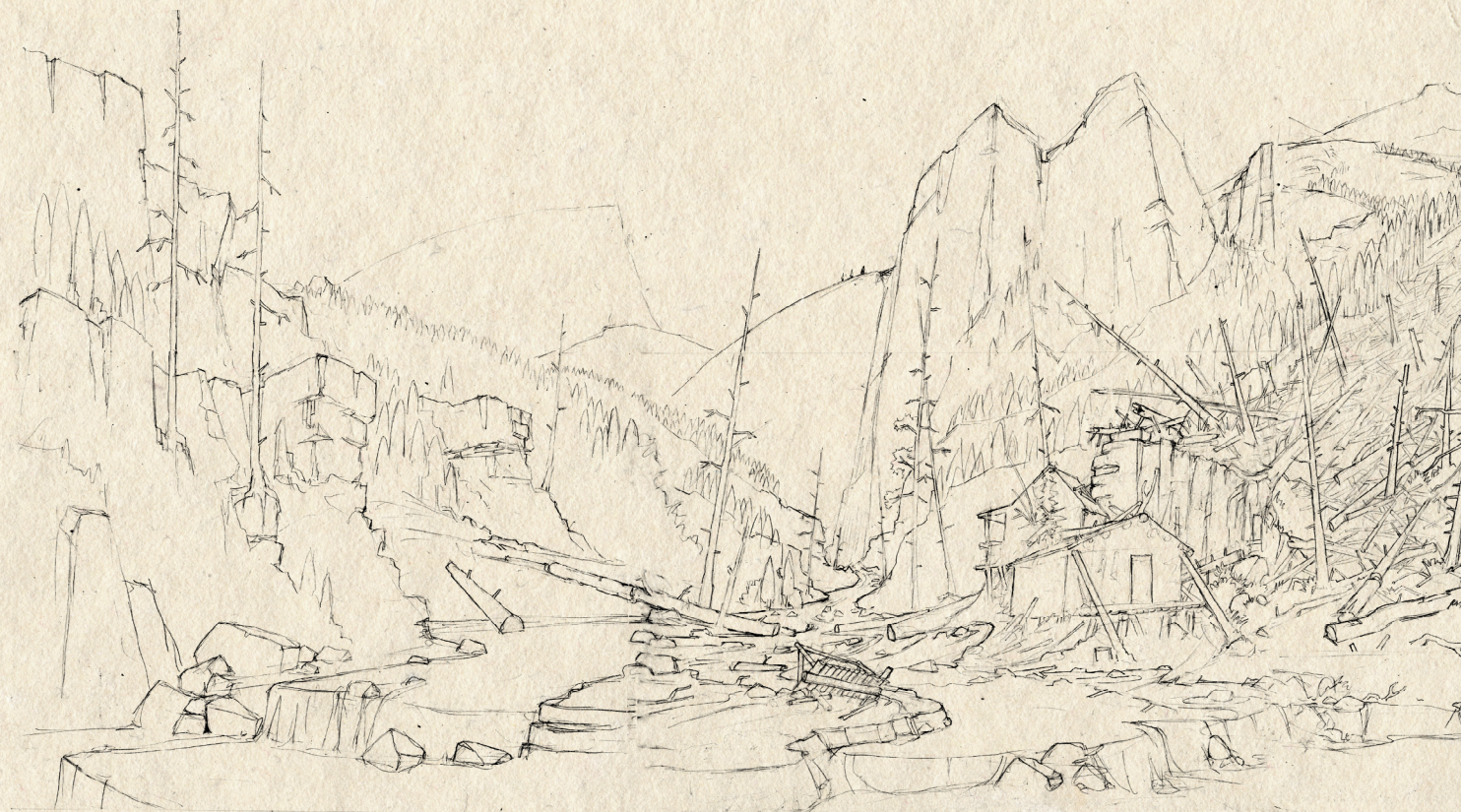
05 In environment concepts it's crucial to give individual characteristics. I illustrated the calm before the storm here. The unique characteristic of this landscape is its frightening peace, and the shapes of the hearse matching the shapes of the hills, trees and road.

06 Every location should tell its own story and have its own atmosphere. Here, sharp rocks, dry forest, and trees fallen on a hut emphasize an unfriendly environment.

05

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06
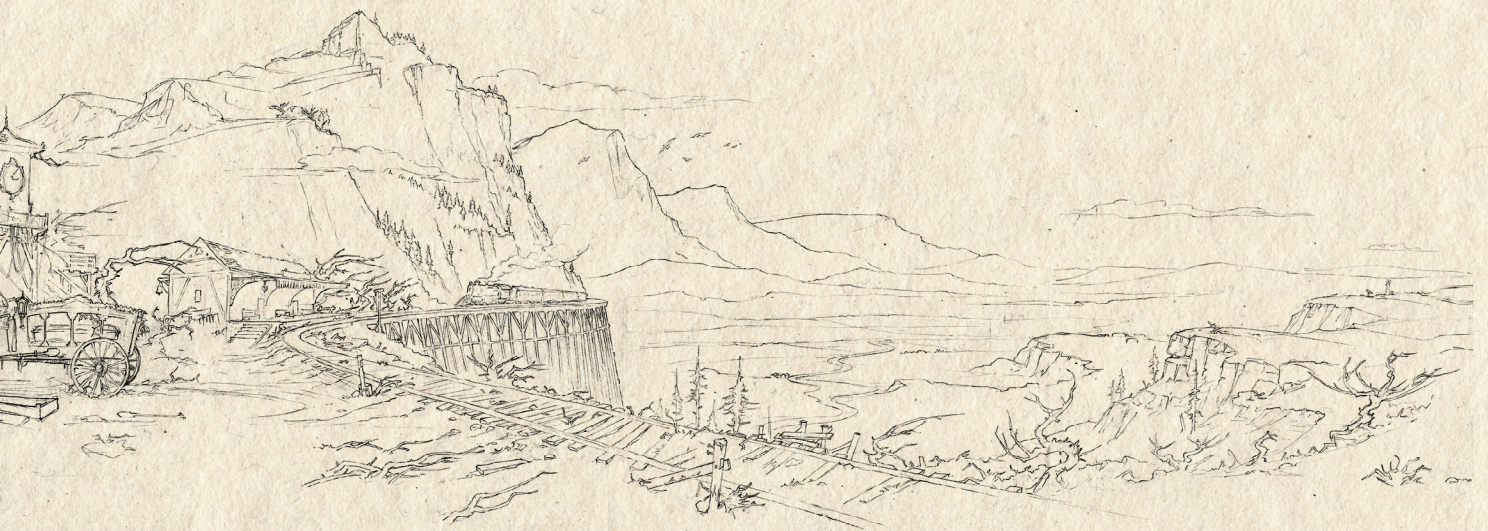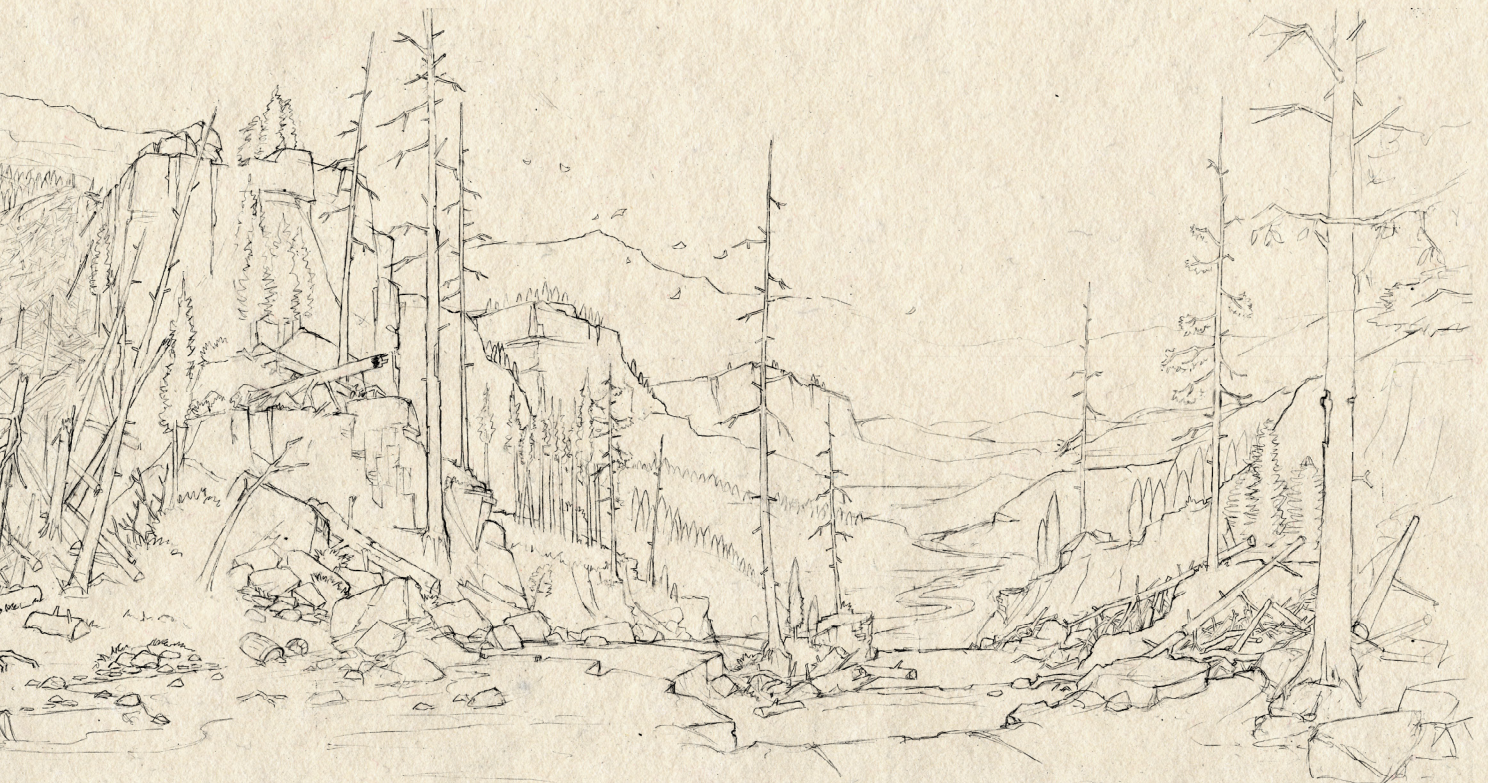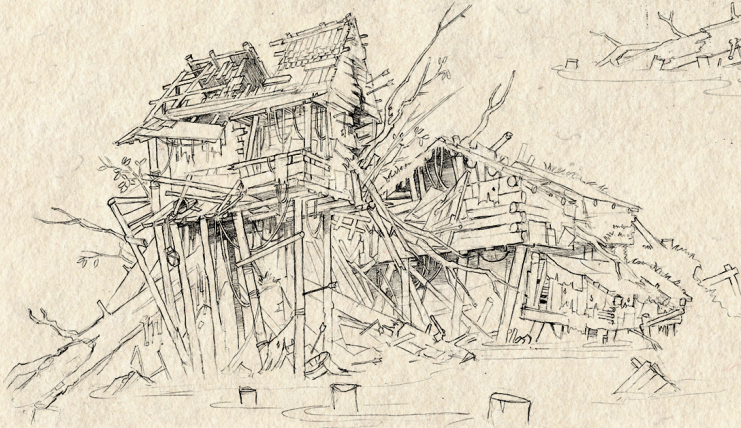
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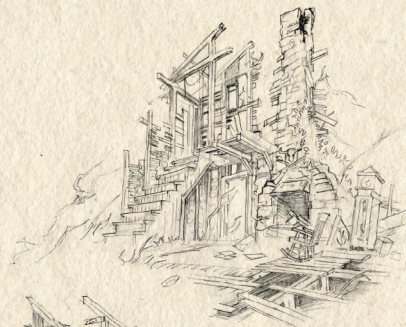
07 Before designing a destroyed object, first design its original shape in your head (before it got destroyed). This will help you to sketch a believable destruction model.

08 While sketching ruins it's good to keep remains of the original construction. It stimulates the imagination of a player and enables him to picture what happened.

09 Large amounts of detail on the picture can give a great effect but it can be distracting as well. Therefore, here I tried to balance the variety of elements present by darkening some sections of the sketch.

10 It's the variety of blocked shapes that makes the building's structure attractive. I avoid simple cuboids. I usually start with the overall structure and shape and as soon as I find them attractive enough I decorate them with small three-dimensional elements.

07

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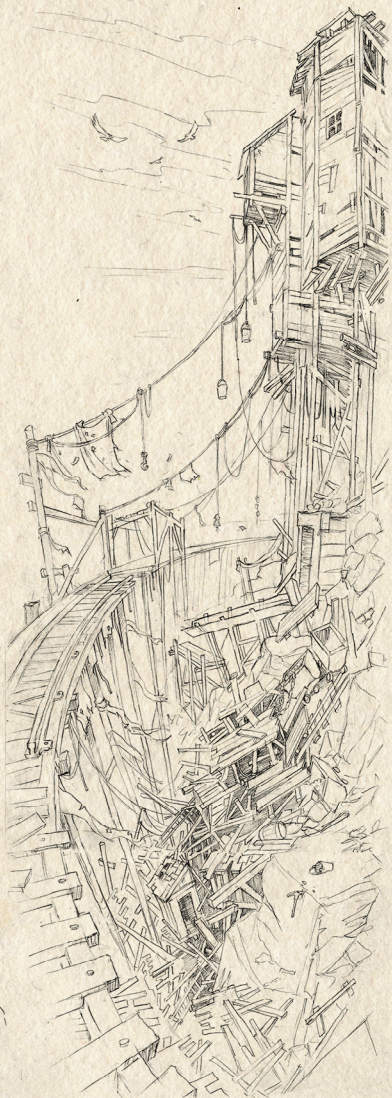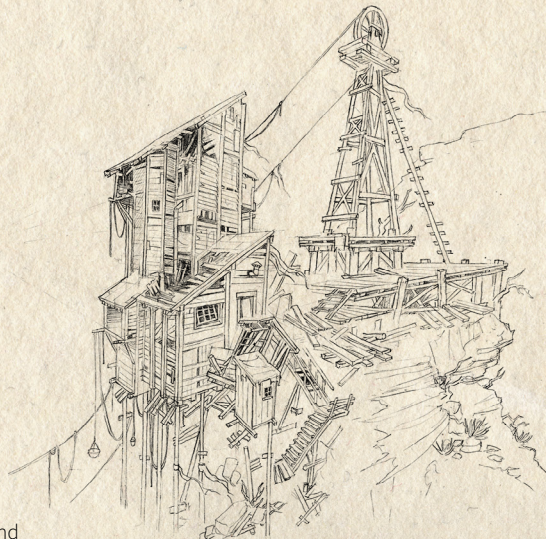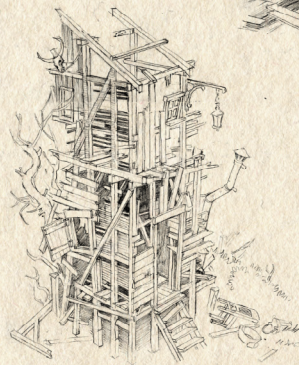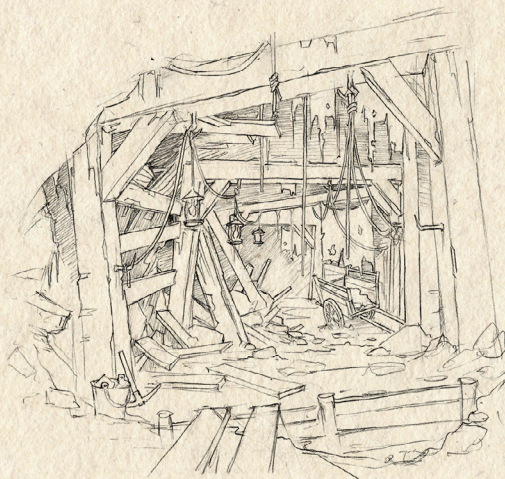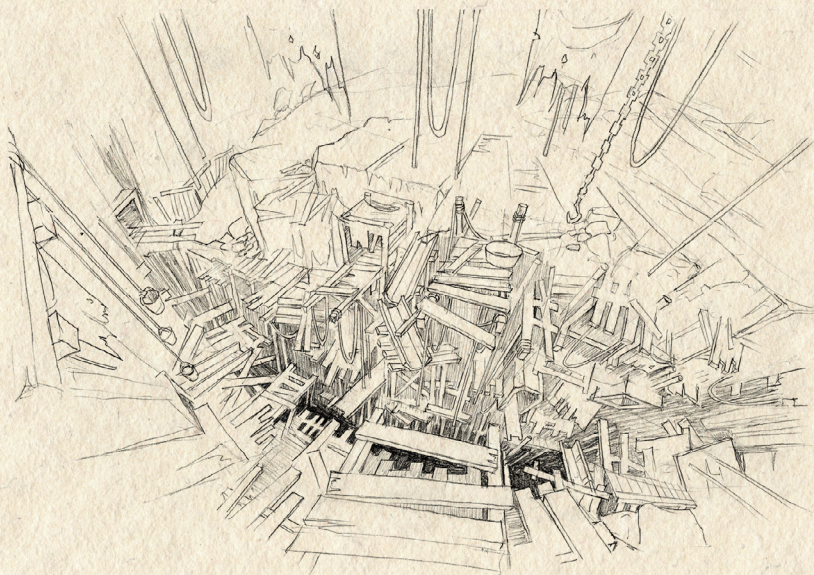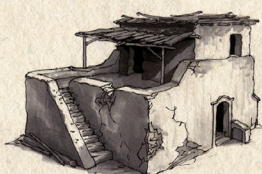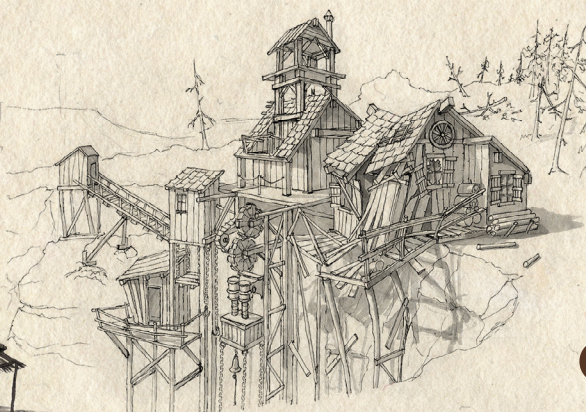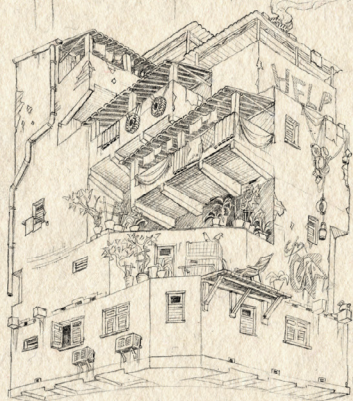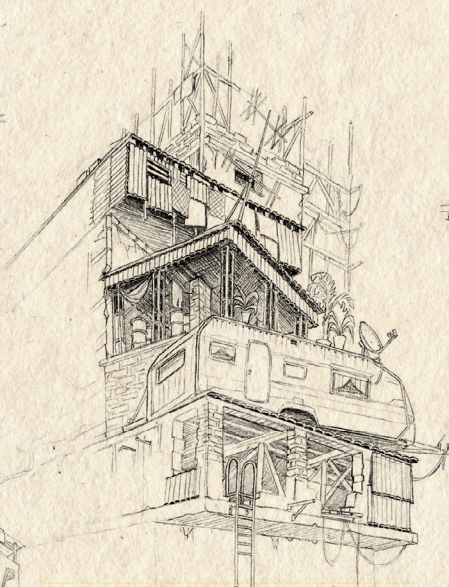
⚡ **PRO TIP**

Shading with markers

To make your line-art more attractive you can use markers to shade it. Start with the brightest marker first and then gradually use darker markers. This structured approach will help you to keep the right balance between the shades.

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11
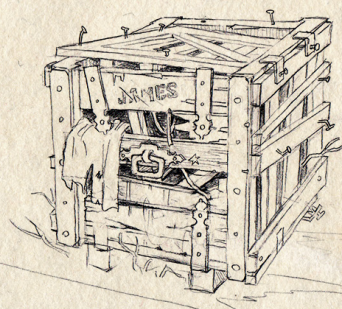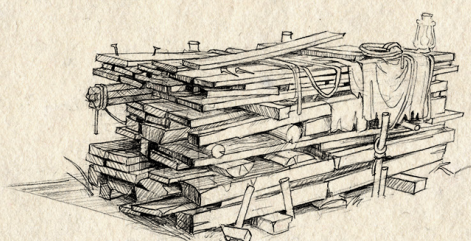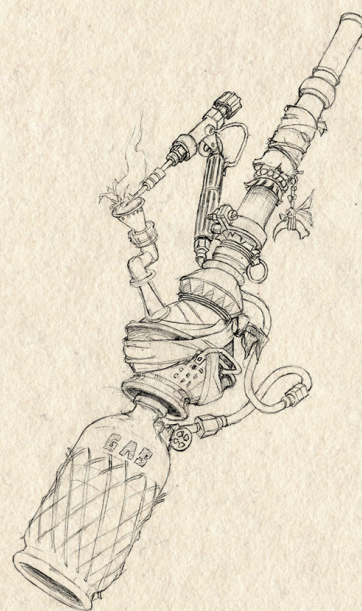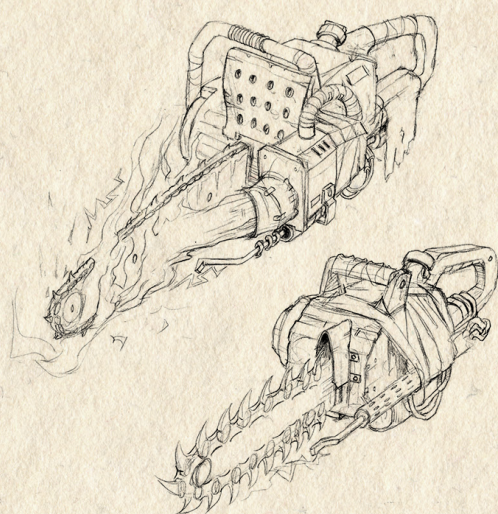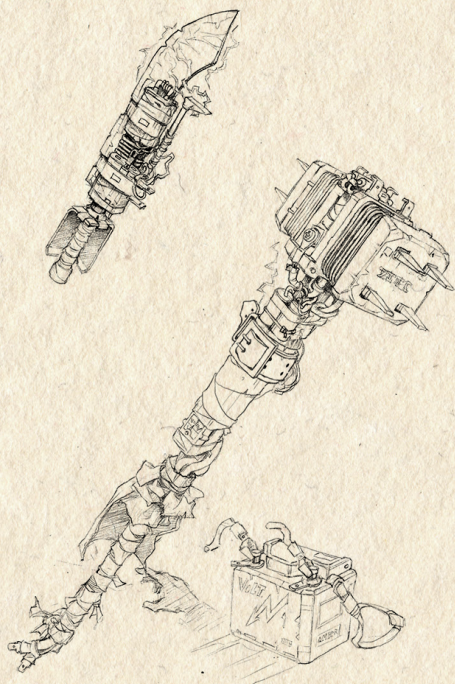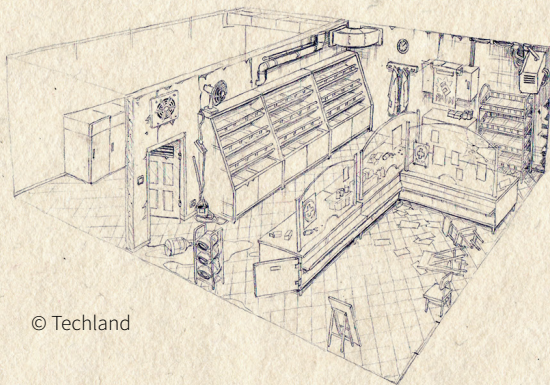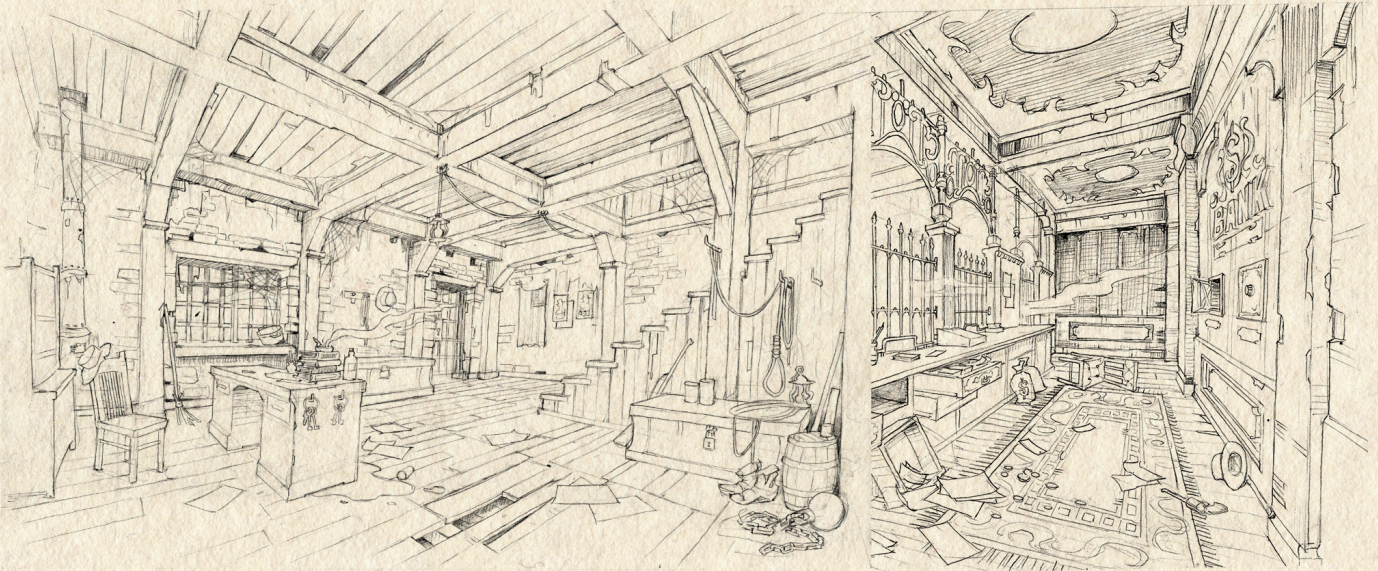
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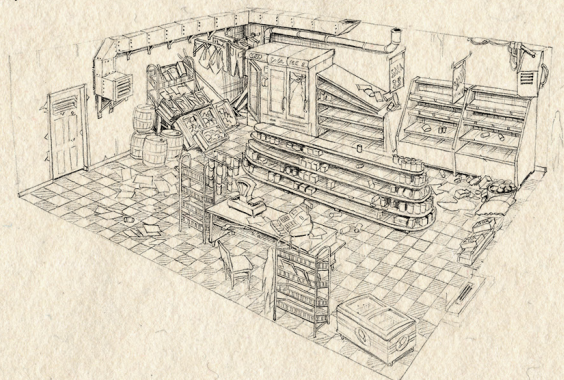
11 I follow the same rule while designing small objects, like weapons for example. I design shapes and structure first and then I focus on details.

12 Remember to differentiate the surface, especially while designing interiors, from the simple geometry of the room. I usually divide the surface into two or three main sectors and work on each of them separately, keeping in mind the full picture.

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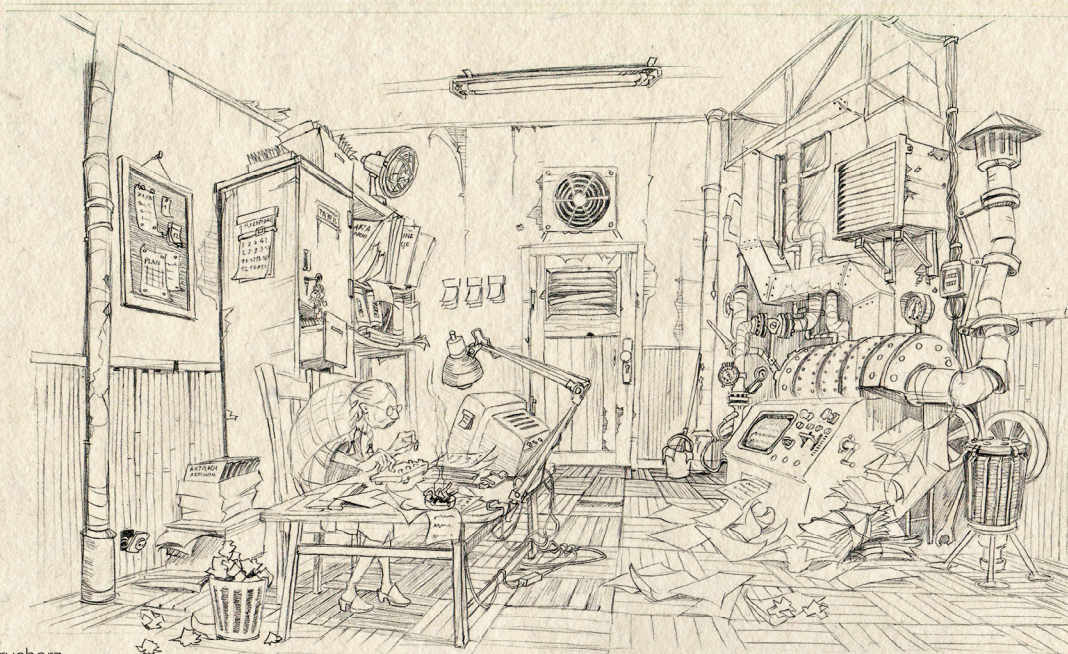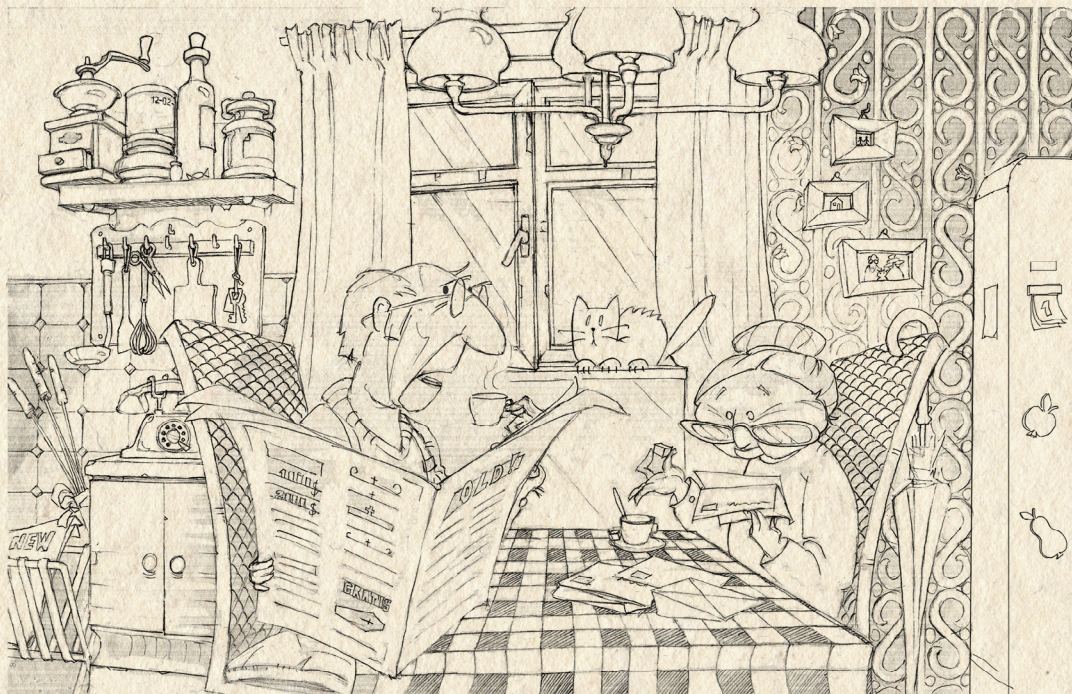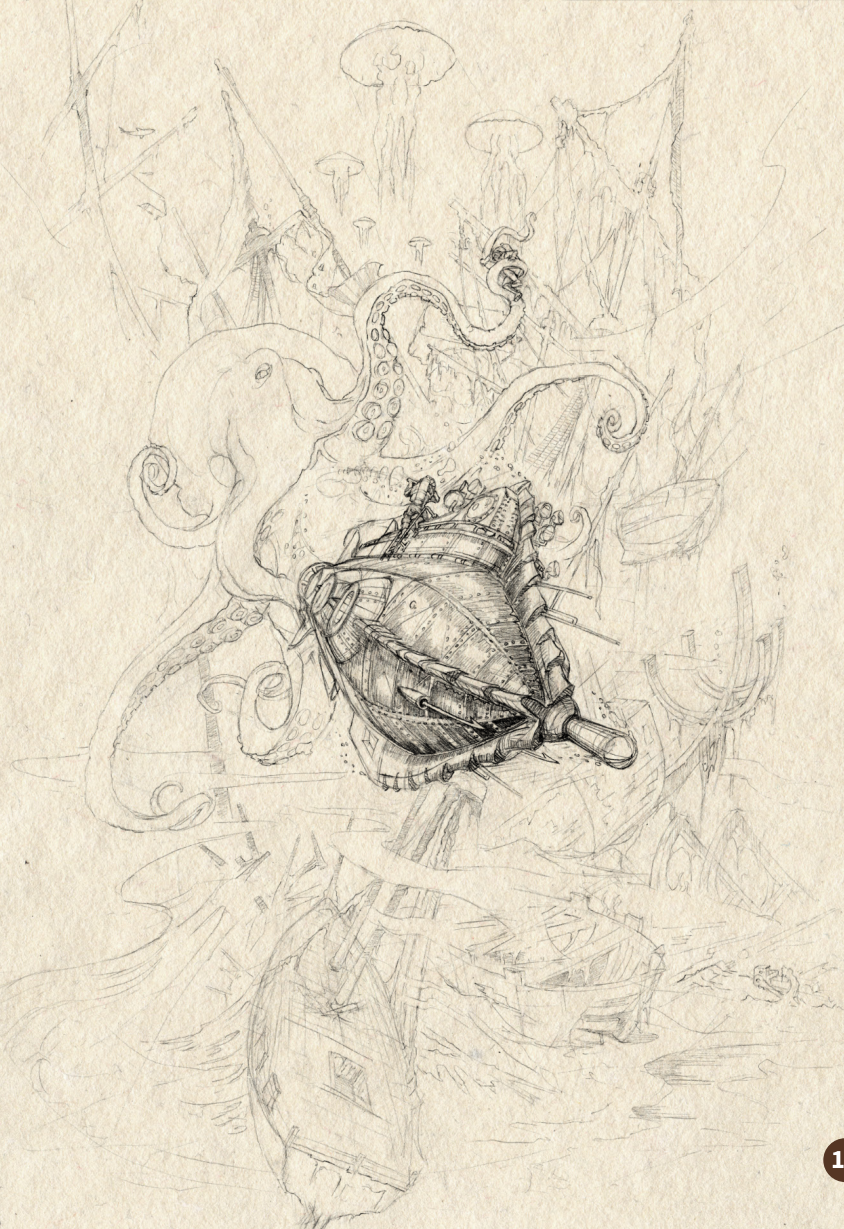
13 When I draw for my private purposes, I like to put small objects from everyday life that stimulate positive connotations in my pictures. I always hope the viewer will enjoy discovering them one by one in my sketches.

14 If there are key elements in a sketch I adjust the entire composition to attract viewer's attention to them. I also draw these elements with a bit higher quality than the rest of the picture.

14

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16

15 If you sketch ropes and lines, pay attention whether they are bold, thin, dark or light. I sketched the background with an H-pencil and the foreground with a B-pencil. To show the size of an object I sketched a silhouette of a man.

16 While sketching a face I look for the right dynamic by drawing quite fast lines and curves. I also use the lines for shading, as it gives the impression of slight movement.

2dartist

Would you like to see your sketches featured in 2dartist magazine?

We're always on the lookout for talented artists and their artwork to adorn the pages of our magazine. If you think you have what it takes, get in touch!

To submit, simply email Jess at **jess@3dtotal.com** with a selection of your images or a link to your portfolio online, plus a little information about you.

We look forward to hearing from you!

The Artist

Christopher Peters
Web: christophpeters.cghub.com

Software Used:
Adobe Photoshop

Christopher Peters is a young artist who has dedicated his life to music, history and digital art among other things. He notes that his art defines him as controlled chaos, and he considers himself an eternal student.

Design an original character concept

Christopher Peters takes us through the tools and techniques involved in creating a matter-mutating character concept, and shares some useful advice along the way. This step-by-step tutorial covers the process of thumbnails, material studies, texturing and lighting ▶

Christopher Peters applies the idea of mutating matter to create a character...

Sooner or later, matter mutates due to the passing of time and shifting environmental conditions. I wanted to apply this temporary, yet inexorable condition to a conceptual creation – a CG character.

In this case, the following tutorial shows a burning lava monster that emerges from its sulfuric and volcanic environment – thus helping us raise the temperature of this tutorial to the max!

In this chapter you will learn simple, easy to apply techniques that will give our character a very real and professional finish. With techniques like using photo textures, different brush dynamics and applying dynamic layers, I'll simplify processes and significantly reduce the overall effort in time and labor. I will also emphasize simple tips to help you make more accurate and effective decisions.

One of the ways you can define the biological evolution of an individual is by looking at the environment in which it lives, as well as also considering the needs and difficulties generated by that environment. So, as a first step, I will design and create the environment that will shape our little friend. I will also define the materials and basic needs that our friend must have in order to survive as a species over time.

Because of this, I will adopt a new process for creating this image. First, I will create the background and after I will create the character. For this reason, as a starting point, we will thoroughly study our environment in order to prepare for our creation of the character. So here we go!

01 **Volcanic rocks:** The environment chosen is a volcanic environment; therefore our character will be defined by the materials that make up an environment with these characteristics. So, volcanic rocks, lava, toxic gases and hellish aesthetics will be perfect to generate our background!

These objects have a very dull and textured appearance, because rapidly cooled lava forms micro crystals and grains, which in turn creates the rock. According to the information and research I've gathered, the most common volcanic rocks are basalt and andesite.

01

02

02 **Lava:** Lava is magma (molten rock material at high temperatures) that rises to the Earth's surface. This element has very vibrant and saturated colors. To emulate the lava, we will need red, yellow and orange tones. This vibrant light effect can be easily portrayed in layers using Dodge or Overlay. ▶

01 An impression of the dull textured properties of basalt and andesite

02 Here's a quick study inspired by the lava, integrating textures and photography

"To emulate the effect of steam and gases, we use irregularly-shaped soft brushes and pastels"

03 **Volcanic gases:** The most common gas emanating from volcanic craters is water vapor; water from meteoric rock or, to a lesser extent, magmatic water. To emulate the effect of steam and gases, we use irregularly-shaped soft brushes, and pastels.

04 **Alloy elements:** With the above elements established, I create a fusion that will define the aesthetic end of our background.

05 **Aesthetic and forms map:** To give a more interesting look to the bottom of the form, I create a map of ways to apply the final aesthetic environment. This aesthetic will definitely influence the final design of the character, so we will need to be careful in the choice of forms.

My favorite shapes are generated from extreme angles; points, pinnacles, etc. So we will apply these forms to the rocks, and in conjunction with the proper use of the lava, will conjure a hostile, aggressive and chaotic atmosphere.

06 **Using photographs:** With all the data and relevant studies, we can start creating our background. As previously
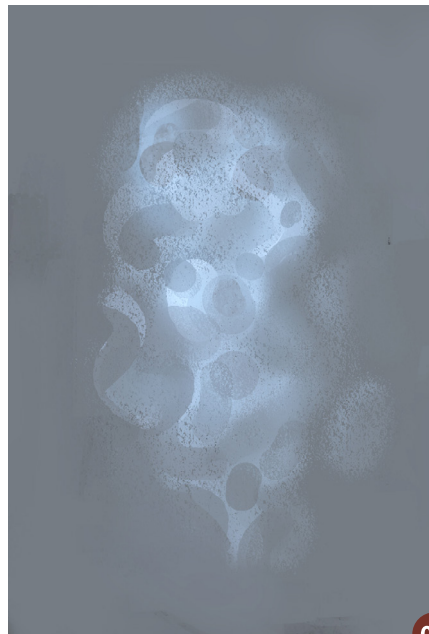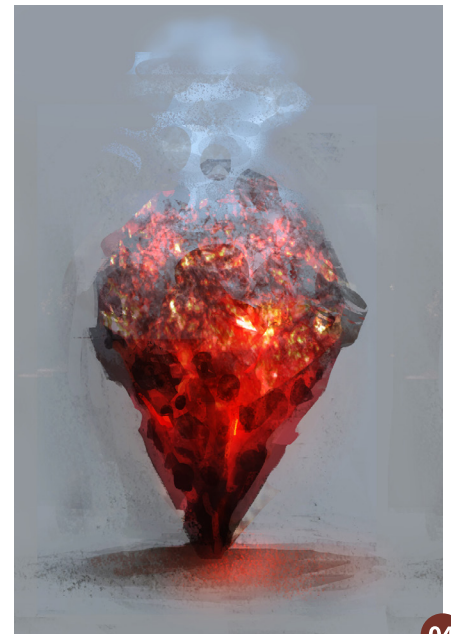
mentioned, we need to take care to use techniques that will help us to simplify the processes of creation. That's why to create our background we will apply photo references in our painting. This way, we effectively make an alloy of photographs and paintings.

There are endless ways to use and implement photographs in our work, and as all things, they have their pros and cons. We can deliver a very good result, but also forever ruin our image. For this reason we must consider two basic rules when choosing and using our photographs:

1. **Lighting:** The lighting of the photograph should have both subtle and extreme lighting. It should preferably possess a diffused illumination, like a cloudy day, as it contains no drop shadows that can confuse the viewer.

2. **Perspective:** The perspective of the photo should always be neutral. A texture photograph should ideally be a single frontal shot, because we may later adapt the geometry of the surface, with the Ctrl+U function in Photoshop.

"This stage is very important because it will give a pictorial aesthetic to our photography"

07 **Integrating photography:** The photos we integrate must be similar to our material references and should consider all the points of our study. To embed the picture, I follow this simple process:

Adaptation – Shading – Painting adjustment – About Texturing – Lighting

In the adaptation phase, the picture should be placed according to the perspective that we want to get. My basic photos from the last step need no further transformation, as they already have a neutral perspective.

08 **Shading:** If your texture photo needs some extreme shadow, we can edit the photo's dark areas and add some environmental occlusion using some soft brushes and Overlay and Multiply layers.

09 **Painting adjustment:** This stage is very important because it will give a pictorial aesthetic to our photography. We will also have the opportunity to add details that we would like to have, or just change or move figures and objects. You can use textured brushes to achieve this effect. ▶

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03 Creating water vapor using irregularly-shaped brushes

04 Combining the previous images to create key components in the environment we've made

05 Creating the right shapes and forms will influence the character's creation

06 Photo texture images taken with the right lighting and perspective

07 Starting out with the right perspective in your texture photo will greatly speed up the process

08 Adding extreme shadow to a texture image to create a darker appearance

09 Adding detail using a textured brushed to achieve a mood
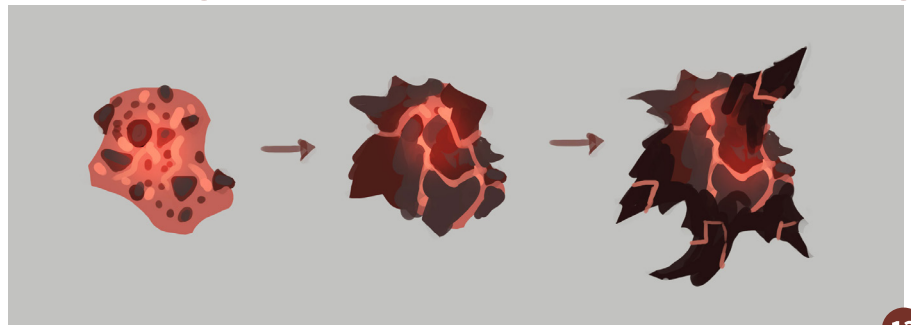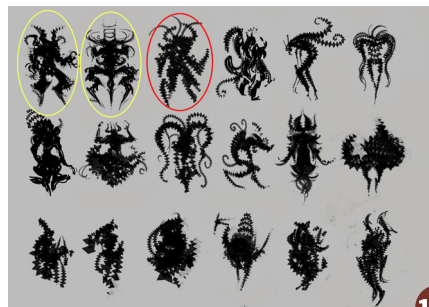
10 **Over texture:** The over-texturing is the process where we add extra textures to create a mix between photography and painting. For this we can take the same photographs, or can simply paint with textured brushes. This process is optional.

11 **Lighting:** This is one of the most important steps in the treatment of a photograph. This process will define the success or total failure of the integration. To carry out this process simply add the lighting through layers and lighting effects. These light effects can be done using soft brushes and by layering with Overlay, Dodge and Multiply.

12 **Atmosphere:** The atmosphere is an important part of our image and is generally a product of the environment's lighting. In this image, I'm looking to create a consistent effect of remoteness. We can get this effect by painting more distant areas softly and desaturated, with pastel colors and low opacities.
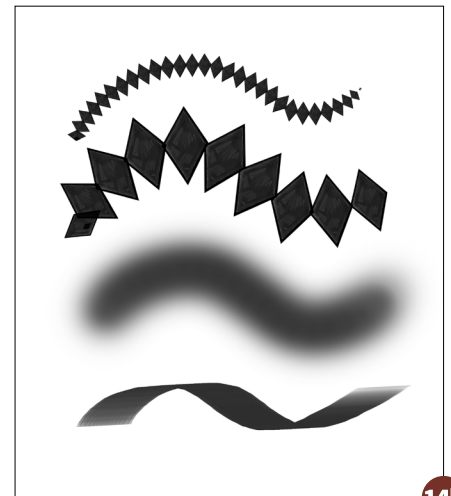
Now the distant landscape is basically established, I will begin to include angular shapes for the rocks. I paint these silhouettes in the background to start shaping the ambience.

I then add some photo textures and lava as made earlier. With color filters like Levels, Curves and Color Balance, I can edit and correct some aspects of the background.

13 **Evolution:** Now that we have created the environment and the world that will shape and develop our creature, we're ready to create our friend.

Considering all the evolutionary study and material that we have gathered to create the

15

So to start, the base color step is pretty simple. This is the point where we choose natural colors to suit our character. These colors will be affected by the light sources we use. In the case of our character, I have chosen a very similar tone to the volcanic rock – dark gray. For the center of his magma, I choose some reds, oranges and very vibrant yellows. ▶

10 Adding texture over the top of the image creates a different result

11 Adding lighting determines the success or failure of an image

12 Creating the atmosphere and depth by adding distant rock pinnacles and flowing lava

13 This shows a simple and obvious evolution of our character

14a The original set of silhouettes that show potential character designs

14b The set of brushes inspired by the character silhouettes

15 Developing the silhouettes into more detailed designs

16 Marking in which areas on the character have color

background, we can only give physical form to the evolutionary process. Therefore, I will do something more simply stated, so I define the lava as a creative force, and make a solid volcanic rock body.

This body will be fueled by slow-cooling magma, and to regulate the climatic condition of the exterior the surface will be partially framed and open to show the magma solidification process.

14 **Thumbnails, silhouettes and more:** The character creation process is widely used by artists and if used often enough, helps fuel the conceptual imagination. The silhouettes/thumbnails process involves generating mini shapes and forms that demonstrate one simplified version of a character.

I paint my designs with a diamond-shaped brush as seen here in this image, in order to give me an idea of how they could form shapes and character designs.

15 **Choosing a final design:** Of these silhouettes I choose two to develop into more detailed sketches, and a third at random, to set it as a final silhouette.

16 **Rendering the silhouette:** Now that we have defined and positioned the silhouette in the background, it is time to render it. At this stage we have to take into account the characteristics that we studied previously, and for this rendering phase, follow this process:

Base Color – Spotlights – painting and texturing – Painting adjustment – Global Light

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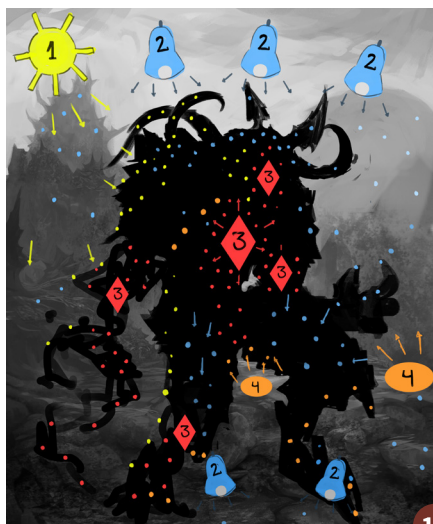
17 Spotlights: This is where you define the spotlights affecting the colors, materials and volumes of the character.

Our character will be affected by four light sources:

1. **Solar Light:** This light source comes from the sun and will be responsible for highlights and points of intense light. This is represented by the yellow lamp.

2. **Ambient Light:** This light comes in from the sky, from the environment, and everything that may affect the environment. This is represented by blue lanterns. Colors: blue, gray and brown.

3. **Internal light:** This light source comes from within our character and is produced by magma. It will be our tonics color palette and is represented by the red lantern. Colors: red, orange and yellow.
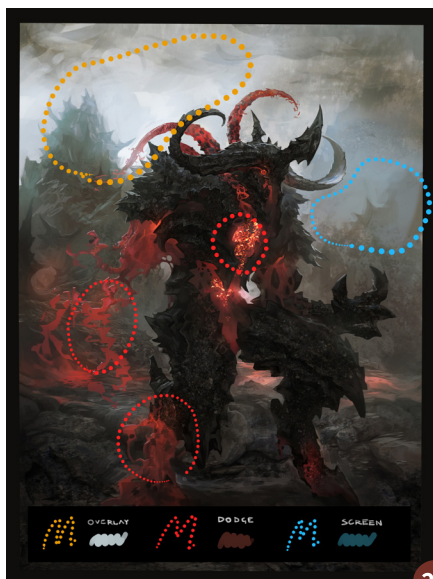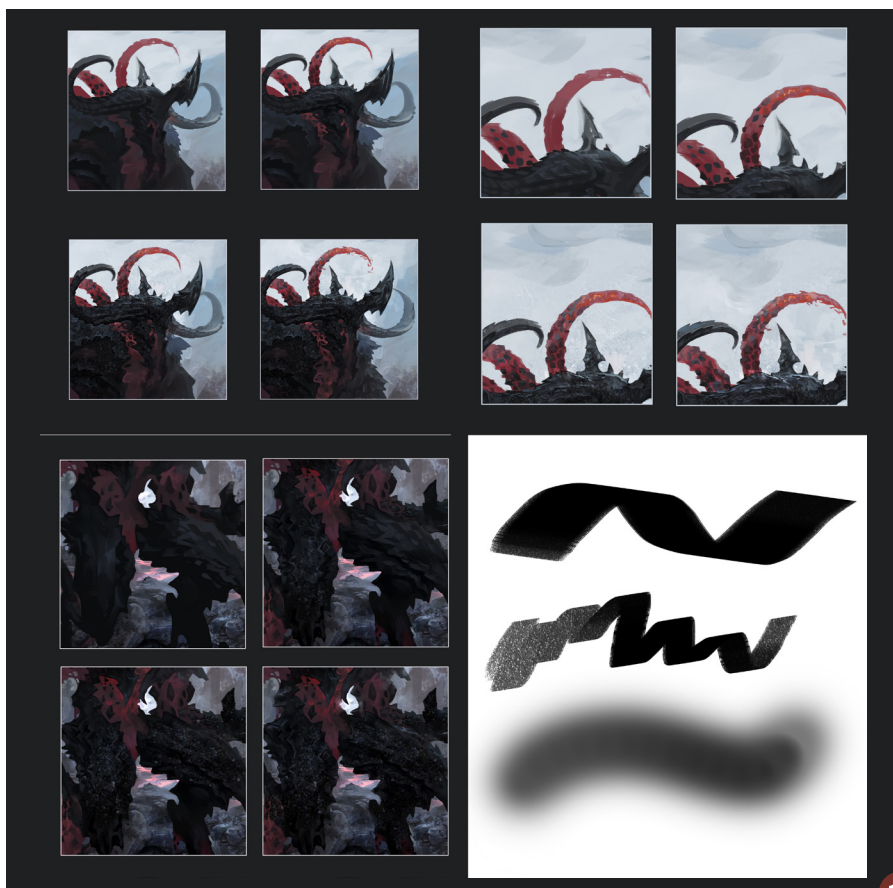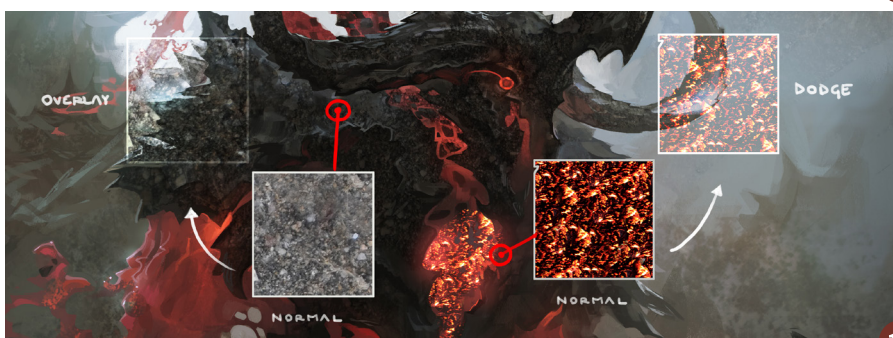
4. **Reflections of Magma:** This light source comes from the magma found in rocks, soil and inside the character. These lights will bounce about and affect our character to a lesser extent. This is represented here by the orange lantern.

18 Painting: At this stage, I begin rendering materials and shapes, taking into account the information derived above. I paint the corresponding volumes carefully, watching the direction of light, geometry and textures.

19 Texturing: For texturing, I will use the above pictures to give it a more realistic effect. The photos will be cropped and placed in Overlay mode to integrate the painting. I then edit the textures using filters like Levels, Curves and Color Balance to integrate them more effectively.

20 Painting adjustment and global light: With the textures in place we can relax and have a little fun painting in the small details, such as granite, rock, rock textures, spikes and tentacles. I can also adjust the figures, integrate the map in keeping with the earlier design, and change things that I wasn't satisfied with. At this stage, I only deal with simple brushes.

I always consider the lighting stage to be one of the most important steps, and as mentioned before, this process helps unify the entire image by integrating the character and background more effectively.

At this stage, I add filters to the layers such as the Overlay, Dodge and Multiply to give different lighting effects, reflections and shadows.

21 **Final settings:** Now it's time to judge the image, have a coffee and relax! We can assess areas that might be missing something, or take something away, or even add things if we want.

At this stage, filters like Color Balance (Ctrl+B), Levels (Ctrl+L) and Curves (Ctrl+M) are excellent choices to give your image the perfect finish. ●

The Artist
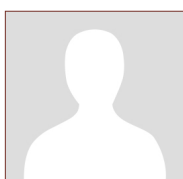
Christopher Peters
Web: christophpeters.cghub.com
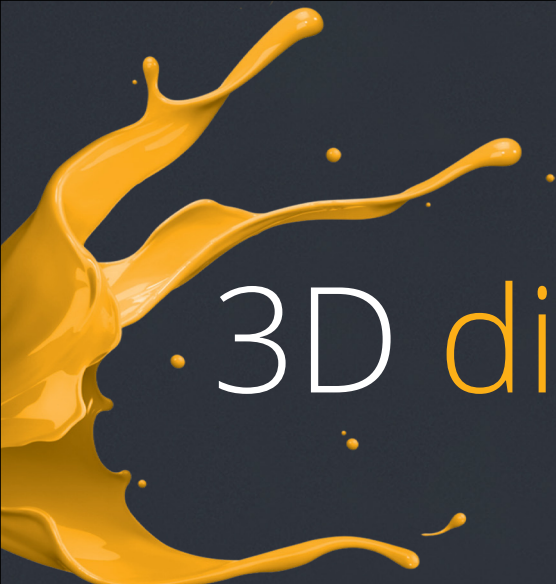
The Artist

YongSub Noh
Web: http://yong.cghub.com

Software Used:
Photoshop

YongSub Noh is a self-taught,
3D animation artist from
South Korea. He currently
works for NCsoft and enjoys
playing PC games, playing
the drums and working on
concept art in his spare time.

Paint epic cities

YongSub Noh takes a comprehensive look at creating a fantasy world from a concept
perspective, and investigates the processes and techniques that can be used to create all the
major features of a game or film. In this tutorial, YongSub shares advice on how to concept and
create an industrial building set in a medieval fantasy world ▶

Read on to discover YongSub Noh's tips for creating a sense of scale...

In this tutorial, I will cover the creation of an industrial building set in the popular theme of medieval fantasy. I will be using Photoshop to craft this image, although, as I mentioned in my previous tutorials, the type of software you use is not all that important in creating this image.

This topic is quite a big job and has a fair few technical requirements in terms of detail and expression, so let's get started!

01 **The scene:** First, let's envision the overall scene in our head. The initial outline in your imagination alone can draw a schematic, but it's also a good idea to draw out thumbnail images to formulate your ideas. It's work that quickly creates models and materializes ideas by using lines on a surface.

When you work on a lot of simple sketch drawings, like the ones you see in this image, you will easily obtain a lot of ideas . It would be good for all of you to cultivate this habit in your everyday work.

First of all, the facility I am trying to create is a hydroelectric power plant. Because it's going to be in a medieval fantasy world, the design will be configured in an analog design. There is water, waterfalls and a big water-mill that creates a spin using the force of the waterfall; these will be the major structural themes and subject for this work.

02 **The early stages:** I always think that your early work should really only consist of creating a large basic framework. You should work on the entire configuration of the scene in a fast and simple manner.

03 **The process:** Formulating a harmonious overall appearance for the hydroelectric power plant and its field is very important. I always start with a large form and then progress to smaller details, moving from the dark areas to the brighter areas.

In this stage, the expression is not yet clear, so, before proceeding with the work, you have to first think about which direction the light (from the sun) will be coming from.

04 **Specific detail:** The image here shows how I create more specific details. The sun is positioned on the left, and I roughly express the light and shadows from that angle.
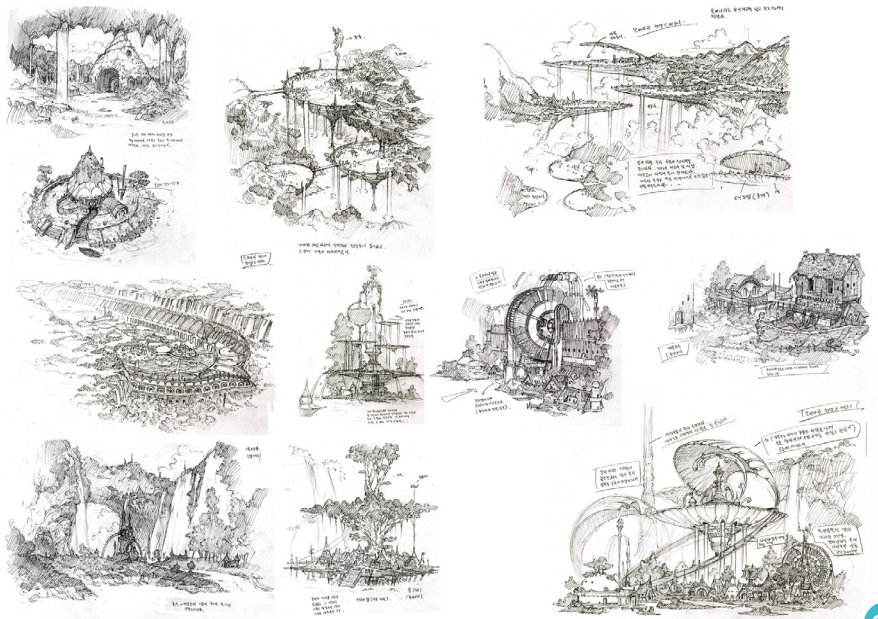
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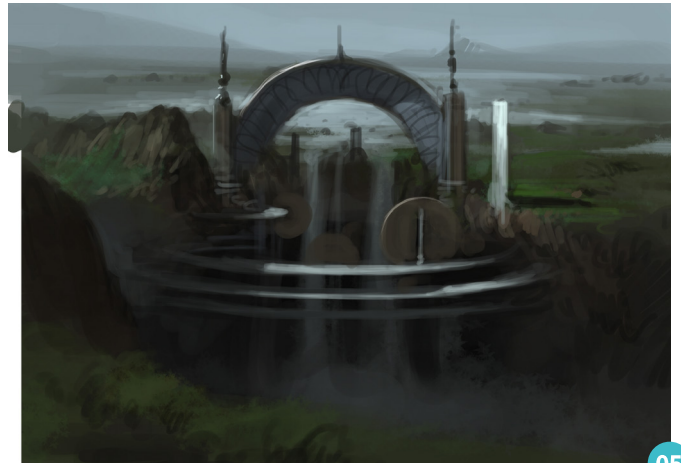
05

05 **Cropping and repositioning:** The main topic, the hydroelectric power plant, seems to slope to the left and unbalance the image at the moment, so I expand the left side of the canvas. When you're working on a project you need to have a flexible mind set. If you think that there is a problem with your work you need to rethink drastically and fix the problem right away. Don't hesitate.

06 **Tweaking the tone:** To revive the sense of space, I slightly tweak the tone. The forests located at the very front are quite a large distance from the hydroelectric power plant, and the background behind the hydroelectric power plant also recedes for quite a distance too. In other words, three-dimensional space exists.

I use the atmospheric perspective that a lot of you will have already encountered to represent distance and space. I choose the color tone of the atmosphere to be blue. There will be large amounts of water vapor in the air, and so forth, so it makes sense that the atmosphere will have blue lighting.

06

07 **Adding detail and rich colors:** I add details to the forest, rocks and the hydroelectric power plant now. To create rich colors, I add a little color to the greenery in the field. Usually when expressing a huge cliff like this, you need to add atmosphere on the bottom to emphasize the depth and a feeling of space. ▶

01 Sketching out potential scenes helps hone the ideas you will take forward

02 A quick and rough depiction of the industrial region

03 Working from large rough shapes to smaller details works well

04 Placing the source of light and adding shapes helps to establish volume

05 Repositioning the frame helps focus the main objects in the image

06 Matching the tone to themes in the image will help unify the scene

07 Adding richer colors helps add a sense of vibrancy and life

07

08 **Correcting problems:** I still haven't used any layers in this image. The reason for this is that, by doing so; I feel that I can draw out a better picture for a more natural look. Also, it's because this work is being created at such a fast pace. It's still in a very rough state at the moment; however, if any problems occur with the drawing, it can be easily fixed and changed without a problem. That is why the speed of your work is very important and I recommend that you do not obsess over the little details. Boldly continue your drawings, because the modification of digital painting is very easy.

In this scene, I don't like the fact that the bottom of it is exposed too much, so I cut off the bottom and decide that the balance in the composition looks better now.

09 **Creating transparency:** The arch part will be expressed with a huge sheets of glass, so I add a sense of transparency to it.

10 **Adding little details:** Now that the overall composition has been completed, I'm getting started on the little details. I'm refining the look of the arch and the parts of the building.
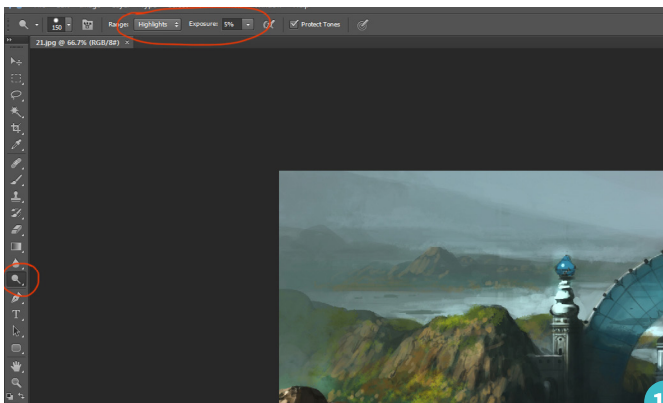
11 **Cloud and water vapor:** Because the cliffs are very deep, there are vast amounts of water vapor from the waterfall, and small clouds fill the space. At this point, you can probably imagine the finished look in your head. From now on I'm going to organize the drawings and focus on bringing out the moods as my focus point.

12 **Light, shadow and birds:** I'm expressing the light and darkness of the piece more clearly and creating many little details now. At the bottom, I also draw a flock of birds. It's a method used by a lot of artists to create an illusion of the massive scale of the scene.

13 **Final touches to the lighting:** Because most of the details are completed, I'm going to get started on a mass clean up. By using the Dodge tool on Photoshop, I make the parts where the light touches brighter.

14 **Highlights and exposure:** As seen in this image, choose Highlights from the Dodge tool properties and set the exposure rate to 5%. By doing so, you can accentuate and emphasize only the highlighted parts. If the exposure rate is high the highlighted part will be emphasized way too much. Adjust the setting to find the one that fits your design.

15 **Hard Light and Overlay:** The details are finished. Now it's time to emphasize the light to make it look more alive. One of the methods that I use to express the light is by using the Hard Light and Overlay method.

Add a layer and change the properties to Hard Light, then use a soft bush to draw out the lights. Also, add a layer and after changing the properties to Overlay, gently rub the part where the light touches it to emphasize it. The reason I use these two properties is because of the fact that the Hard Light decreases the brightness, so you need to strengthen up the brightness by using Overlay.

16 **Light hue:** Even though I expressed the light, I need to show blue lights being produced by the water vapor, so I adjust the color of the Hard Light to a blue color.

17 **Finishing touches:** Finally, I finish off the work after emphasizing the light and darkness by using Levels. This particular work is close to a speed painting. The work hours weren't long, and it was roughly finished in a fast pace. It took approximately four hours to do the work, and if I took more time and trimmed the details more it would be a better piece. But, with this degree of detail and feel, it won't be a problem to deliver the message of the work. ●

08 Balancing the composition can create a better effect

09 Creating the right textures on the arched part of the building

10 Refining the look of the building brings the image to life

11 Creating the water vapor effect at the base of the cliffs

12 A small flock of birds adds depth to the piece

13 Adjusting the contrast makes it seem more vibrant

14 The process and settings for the lighting

15 Using Hard light and Overlay to make the light more vibrant

16 Adjusting elements of the Hard light to reflect the tone in the atmosphere

The Artist

YongSub Noh
Web: yong.cghub.com

On-screen text:

Learn to paint beastly battles

What makes a great fantasy battle scene? I'd have to say a dramatic atmosphere, a multitude of characters and a definite distinction between the two battling sides (you want to be able to see who you're rooting for!) As for scale – the larger the better! Creating a gripping, busy scene can be tricky, I hear you say! In the following tutorial, Piotr Foksowicz shares lighting tips and tricks to help you achieve such a scene!

The Artist

Piotr Foksowicz

DIGITAL ART MASTERS
:VOLUME 8

"An integral part of my own drive for self improvement has always been admiring and scrutinizing the work of others. Getting to see brilliant works of art broken down and explained step-by-step is always a pleasure, and a captivating glimpse into the minds and processes of the artists behind them."

Charlie Bowater
Concept Artist
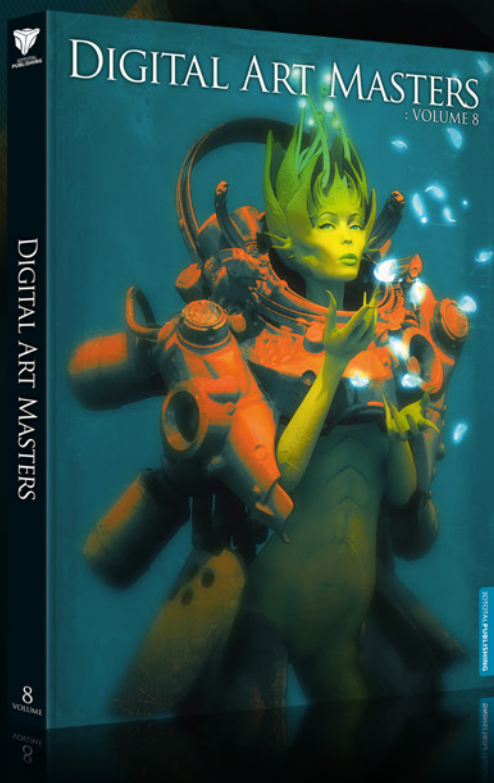
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The classic *Digital Art Masters* series returns with another volume chocked full of brilliant digital art, image breakdown tutorials and unique, never-before-seen images.

Digital Art Masters: Volume 8 is not your typical digital art gallery book. While it does showcase stunning work from 50 of the best international artists, it also includes detailed tutorials explaining how each image was created. Each artist offers insight into their workflow and the methods they employ when it comes to creating a professional piece, from the early concept stage through to the final product. In addition, this year's volume boasts a selection of unique, never-before-seen images for your viewing pleasure. If you're looking to be inspired and learn something at the same time then *Digital Art Masters: Volume 8* ticks all of the boxes.

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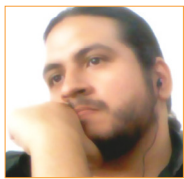
Carlos Cabrera
Web: artbycarloscabrera.com

Software Used:
Photoshop

Carlos Cabrera is a professional concept artist and indie video game developer. He has recently launched *Cypher*, an immersive visual text adventure, which has gained great reviews in the media. In his free time, he creates work for Applibot.

Depict a heavy duty battle scene

Learn how to think outside of the box and create believable battle scenes while harnessing a style that's all of your own with Carlos Cabrera. In the following steps, Carlos leads you through the steps you need to take to create such an image, whilst sharing industry advice and easy-to-follow Photoshop techniques ▶
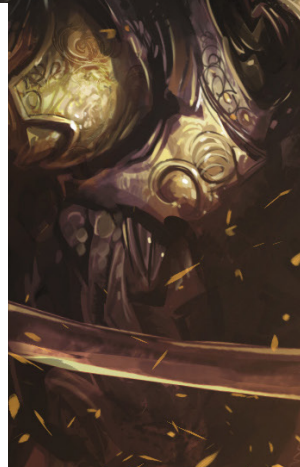
Create of a vivid battle scene and explore new paths to creativity with Carlos...

This tutorial shows you how to create a believable battle scene. Working from a basic concept, you will learn how to find new ways to give your illustration an imaginary culture or story behind the characters, weapons and armor. You will also learn to spread your art horizons and think outside of the box without compromising the style of your art and quality.

In the following steps, you will understand how to mix several ideas from different sources to create a unique and original personal style, which will prepare you for the common workflows every professional artist will encounter in the art industry. You will learn easy-to-follow Photoshop techniques that will enable you to set up more depth and scale in your battle scene, using elements such as fog, ambient light, the color palette and visual effects.

In creating the base, you can enjoy the freedom of creation without considering the render details – and simply have fun brainstorming ideas. Every great illustration needs a base on which to start. Giving your paintings a realistic culture base makes it more believable to the viewer and clients. You can stop worrying about how realistic the render looks like and start to enjoy the full development of your painting; this kind of thinking will give you a different point of view for your future creations.

Finally, you will learn to develop believable weapons and armor to give your characters more realism. From a simple sword idea, through to a wooden shield or a tribal tattoo, you will learn what to do with your own ideas and how to mix it with other artist's imagination to create a whole new culture in your illustrations.

01 **Free your mind:** It's time to unleash your creativity! In this stage you have the idea floating in your head and you need to use everything around you to create something believable. It's time to free your mind.

> **"Some of the ideas for the weapons are great but if we want to keep a clean and readable illustration we can't put all the designs in at once"**

You can use old sketches, doodles, anything; it's a common mistake to think that you have to paint your thumbnails as a pro or even that you must come up with the perfect idea.

I've been a concept artist for more than 10 years so I'm trained to use different workflows to accomplish a task. One of these common workflows is to work from other artist's ideas and mix your own into it to form an original illustration. To do this, I asked Moni Mushi, an amazing artist and girlfriend, to brainstorm some ideas with me for this battle. We find a paper, a cup of coffee and we start to doodle everything that comes to our minds. This step is the most fun, so enjoy it and take your time.

02 **Heavy duty weapons:** Once we agree to design some weapons and armor, the ideas start to flow. In this stage you don't need to be perfect, you just need to be original with your art. We have two armies to design; a human army and the beast/creature side, so I decide to create the human side covered with armor with rounded shapes and spikes. On the other side, the creatures will be less armored and naked. They don't have the intelligence to craft beautiful armor and really just need a big weapon to break their enemy's skull.

01

⚡ PRO TIP

Thumbnail your ideas

Don't think, just draw. Draw alone, in company or mix your art with someone else's. Enjoy the beginning of the illustration and don't throw any ideas away. Maybe a simple doodle that you don't like in the beginning can be the center of your illustration at the end. Draw everything you have around you, take notes of movies, video games, comics and even books – your imagination is a muscle, exercise it every day!

Some of the ideas for the weapons are great but if we want to keep a clean and readable illustration we can't put all the designs in at once – so I decide to let some of the weapon designs go. These are the ideas we throw over the table and the starting point to design different armies.

03 **Visual terms difference:** We now have a pronounced difference in each army. The human side is stronger with weapons and armors – they don't have the muscle but have the brain power to craft better weapons and powerful full-body armor. On the other hand we have the creatures – savages with big muscles that don't need armor because they have physical power. Their weapons are clumsy but lethal.

These are the visual differences of each army, and that's what we need to show in their equipment. ▶

01 Quick pencil sketch ideas from Carlos and Moni – you only need a pencil, a piece of paper and your imagination

02 On this image you can see how Carlos approves some weapons and adds notes for interesting ideas

03 A tattooed arm starts a new path of ideas and creates a marked difference for each army
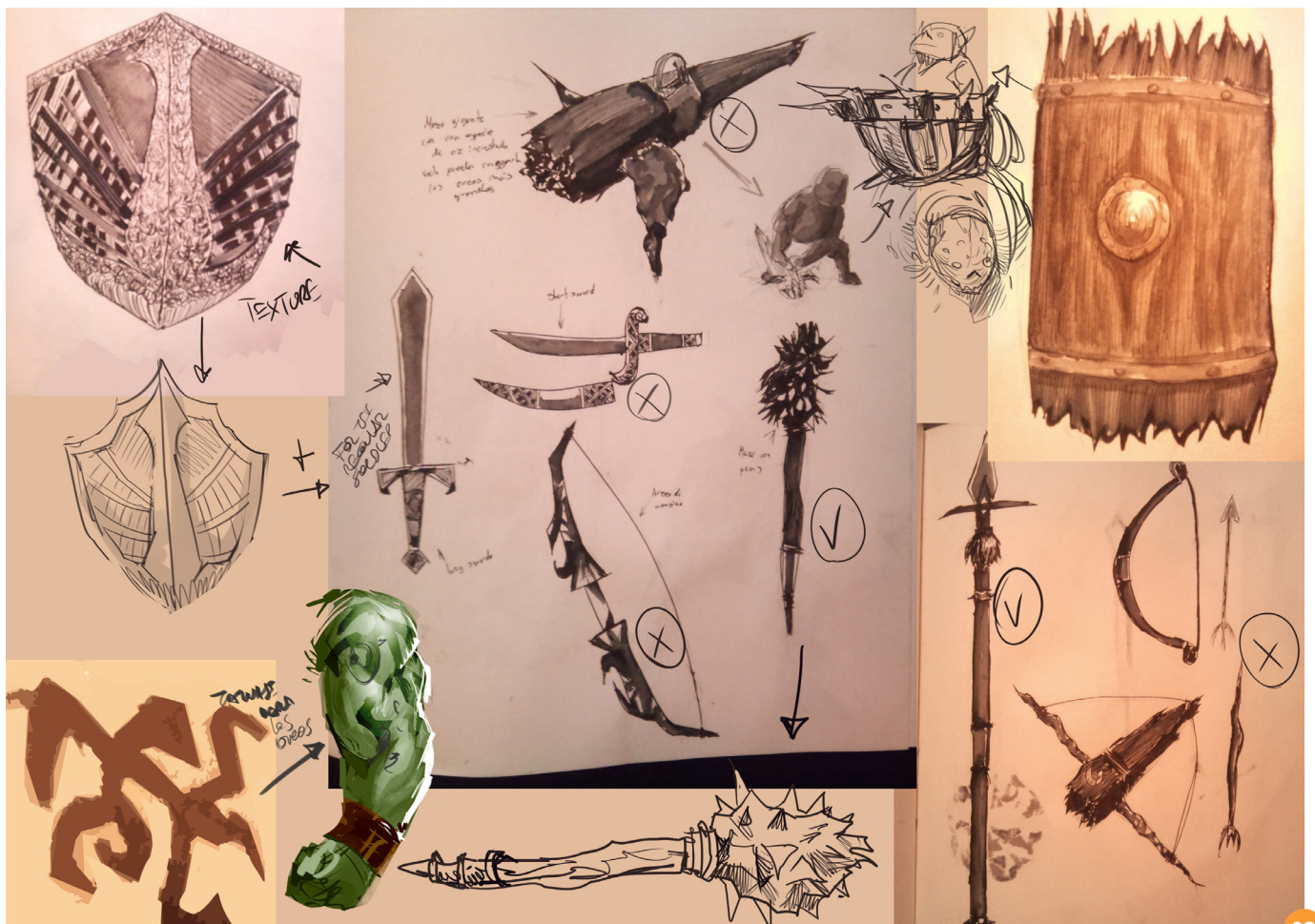
As you can see on the images that illustrate each of these steps, the quantity or quality is not important, we just want the culture reflected for each army.

Moni sketches a tattoo on one of the pages, which inspires me to add some tribal tattoos to the creatures' sides to give them a more primitive mood. I go with that idea and make a simple and quick sketch of an orc's tattooed arm. As you can see, every idea works, no matter how cool or simple it looks.

04 Quick sketch idea: Now it is time to bring the idea to life. We have the culture behind each army and we have the weapons, armor and different characters. I start with a quick sketch on paper, thinking in a circular flow composition which means that everything in the illustration needs to stay inside this circle.

I decide to raise two leaders in the scene – two opposite characters to give you the idea of who is fighting with who. There is no good or bad side here, they are simply two worlds who are at war with each other.

So, keeping in mind the circular composition and the opposite designs of the characters, I make a quick sketch of the characters in the scene. As you
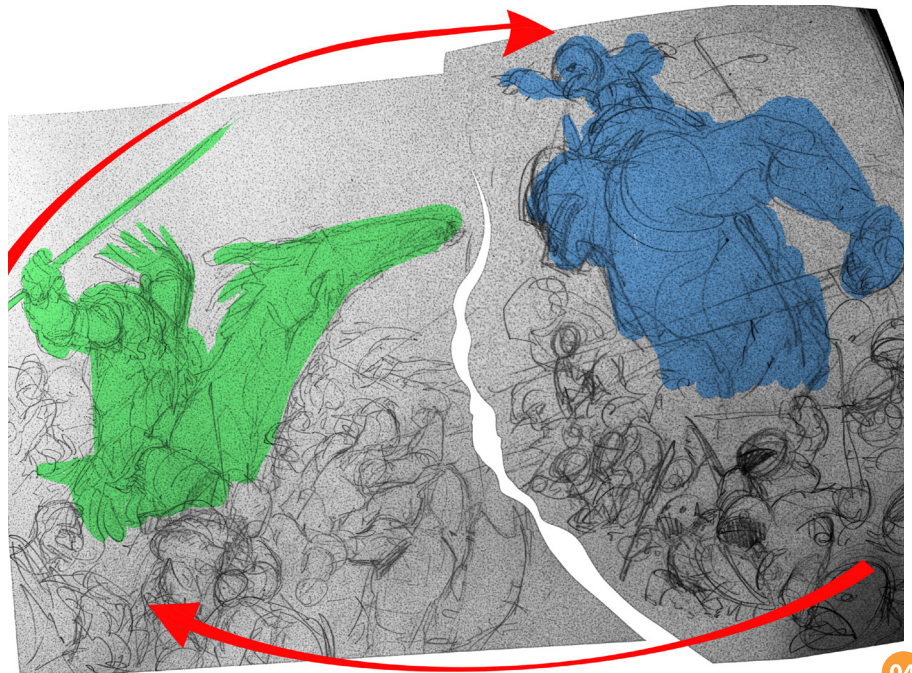
can see, the knight uses a small horse and the little orc boss uses a giant slave. I don't think too much now on the pre-worked design of the armor and weapons – this step is just to give us an idea of how it is going to look in the scene.

05 Light and shadows: It's time to separate each layer to bring some depth to the illustration. Here, we add different values to the scene. The foreground elements will be more saturated than the background objects.

In this epic battle, the ashes and smoke create a dense fog that helps us add depth to the scene and to feel that the intense fight is going to start any minute. With this in mind, take a look at

the sky and you'll see that the clouds keep the circular composition of the previous step – it's very important for balance and style that you keep your strokes and elements in the illustration inside the chosen composition.

At this stage you will see that my first idea was daytime, with soft projected shadows to keep a foggy scene, though you will see in the next step that I take another path for lighting the battle.

06 **Changes and detail:** I like the daytime lighting setup a lot, but I want to try something different now – how about a night scene? Press Ctrl+I and invert the scene, so painted black shadows now become white lights. With that setup, I start to detail the main characters. I keep my painting on grays because I don't want the extra information from color right now, I just want to work on my values.

The bottom lighting setup tells me that I should add fire and a lot of sparks to make the whole image more coherent. I always love to add a lot of texture to my images to create a more traditional mood. I love digital painting, but if we emulate the traditional media with textures and strokes, our paintings will have a greater variety in style and not the same digital smooth aesthetics that many artists have now.

07 **Final gray values:** Remember to separate each character with projected shadows. Lights are important but shadows add the depth we need. Think of each character as an individual object and forget how difficult shading the entire scene is – it doesn't matter if you are painting a giant slave orc or a simple box, the volume is the same so you have to work each character without thinking about what it is.

At this stage you need to worry about adding the correct lighting, the correct projected shadows and consider the different materials.

Remember to add the previously designed armors and weapons – everything we did has a ▶

**04** The circular composition is to allow the viewer's eye to flow over the illustration. Keep the silhouettes of your characters inside this circular flow

05 Values are very important to differentiate each character on your painting, so take your time here

06 Don't be afraid to completely change your lighting. Play with your painting and pick the right mood

07 Now it is time to detail every single object in the image
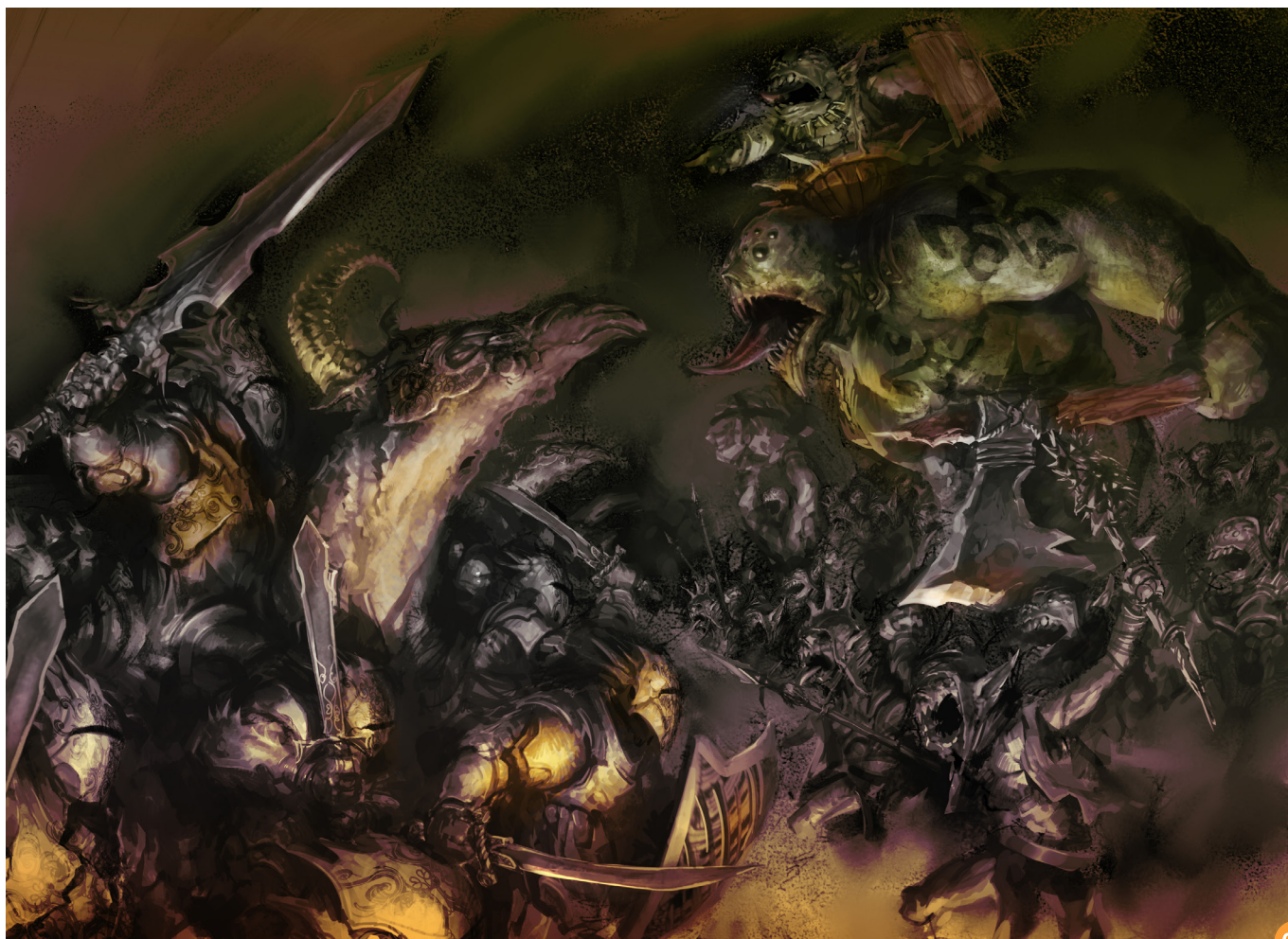
08

> **"Remember that in a battle you need to add wind for increased dynamism in the scene, so make strokes at a specific angle"**

purpose. At this stage I render all the characters, leaving the fog aside because I will add the fog in a separate depth layer later on. This allows me to focus on the render and values, and adding projected shadows.

08 **Color and technique:** I can say that this step is going to be easy but hard at the same time, it all depends on how confident you are with selecting a color palette. It's time to decide which palette to use. As the battle will be surrounded with fire, smoke and ashes, I pick a warm color for the ambient light. The creatures will have a green color tone and the knight will have gold and gray metal. With this palette, I can differentiate each side without a problem.

When I finish my gray values I need to add color – this technique is simple. Create a new layer and change the blending mode to Overlay. Now add the color palette you choose and try to keep a neutral luminosity on each color. If you use a

brighter color on Overlay you will change your original value and will lose all the original values, so keep it simple and don't go crazy yet.

09 **Fog and secondary lights:** It looks great with the Overlay layer, but we still have a lot to do – we are almost finished! Keep adding detail to the armor, weapons and characters –

remember that a battle scene needs big smoke clouds in the background so add that too!

Play with the fog to separate each layer of the scene. Remember that we need a foreground line of characters, a middle ground and a background layer. If you don't use fog everything will appear on the same level and will be very confusing to

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⚡ PRO TIPS

Simplify your early steps

Every time you start a painting, simplify your early steps and don't go crazy with details, though if you sometimes do this you can fix it using the Cutout filter on Photoshop. Go to Filters > Artistic > Cutout, and simplify your art. Use the zoom out function to see if the image is still readable, and keep repeating this step until you feel happy with your painting and then start to add details. Be patient.

Light and shadows

Take a moment to look at a single object in your room, see how the shadows are projected over another surface, and see how the different objects around it make the light bounce over the surface. Transform every character in your illustration on a simple object and reproduce your light studies over them. Shadows are a little flat and generally less saturated than the brighter side of the object, remember that shadows get blurry over distance. A good projected shadow gives you a shot of realism without wasting too much time on details and a complex texture.

the viewer. To add fog just create another layer and change the blending mode to Lighten, use the background color to adjust it and the opacity to keep the strong fog color in the background.

Everything looks cool now but I have noticed that there are too many characters in the scene, and you can't see where one character starts and where the other ends. To fix this, you can use a secondary light, which is another point of light that will help you cut each character out as an individual object. As you can see we have almost three lights on the scene; one is the cold rim light from the top left, the scene light from below and the fire's secondary light coming from bottom right. These three lights will give you a great solution to help the viewer to understand each character in the battle.

10 **Final step and FX:** The final step is here. We did a great job painting this scene and now we just need to add the final touches. Fire effects need to be added. Paint fire on a new layer or use a cool image from your photo library, create a new layer and change the blending

mode to Screen. Now when you paste the fire image, the black on the image will disappear and it will show you only the brighter colors, in this case the fire.

In the same layer you can start to add some sparks. You can easily paint these elements in with just a common brush; just make short strokes with the fire colors. To add depth to your sparks use a darker color on the background sparks. Remember that in a battle you need to add wind for increased dynamism in the scene, so make strokes at a specific angle, imagine and feels how these little sparks will fly in the scene and paint it that way.

Now that everything is perfect and the effects bring life to the scene, the armor and weapons have a story behind them and the scene has depth and good lighting, we can call this illustration finished.

It's not hard at all to paint a battle scene like this if you work from the base of the design. If you start to paint a battle scene without a culture behind

it, or without correct values, it will become more and more difficult with every stroke. Take your time with the first steps because those steps are the enjoyable ones! Appreciate the beginning to reach a happy final! I hope you enjoyed this tutorial as I did making it! ●

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08 An overlay layer will give you the freedom to play with colors

09 You have to see each character as an individual illustration

10 Play with the visual effects to add more life and dynamism to your battle scene

The Artist

Carlos Cabrera
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10

The Artist

Devon Cady–Lee
Web: facebook.com/
DevonCadyLee

Software Used:
Photoshop

Devon Cady-Lee is a concept
artist and illustrator working
both contract and full time in
the entertainment industry
since 2006. While his primary
work is on games, he has also
done work for effects and
film studios.

Learn character painting techniques

Ever wondered what effect extreme wealth would have on our evolution? In
the following tutorial Devon Cady-Lee explores a character concept for the
theoretical adaptation of the human race in a world of wealth ▶

Devon Cady-Lee reveals how he creates character concepts that have evolved in wealth…

The assignment for this concept was to portray the effects of wealth on human evolution. Although science fiction, it is rooted in speculative science – without extreme pressures from the environment, how can the human body react and change? How can we make this visually interesting as a concept?

Art and science aid each other in understanding. Science inspires artists, while artists can help crystallize ideas with their imagery. I feel the most fun way to approach assignments like these is academically, and so I do as much thorough research on evolutionary theory as I can and then go wild. The ideas behind a concept are just as important as their execution, and the more information I gather the more inspiration I will have. I definitely discovered things that I would not have assumed before I began that helped me to develop my concept. I get to pretend that I have a degree in evolutionary biology, but at the end of the day, the imagination is king and I will do what it takes to ensure the image is appealing.

My strategy is simplistic when I do concepts; just let the story of the image take center stage and try to support it with my design. It seems straight forward, but subtle differences can make or break the storytelling, and every aspect from facial expression to decoration needs to be considered.

01 **Initial thumbs:** Before I even start painting, I start with intensive research. This assignment is challenging in that the effects of wealth on human evolution are not obvious. In order to make something visually interesting, there has to be quite a good amount of gross evolution to make a physical change in animals – developing the ability to breathe under water for instance.

Wealth is not a large environmental pressure, and so it would not cause a direct physical adaptation in humans. It is comfortable for an animal to be wealthy, so why change? These are the questions I ask first and try to answer.

Through this research, I find information that inspires my initial concept. Wealth for humans has a direct correlation on our nutritional intake, which in turn affects our growth. Scarcity results in dwarfism to conserve energy; while abundance
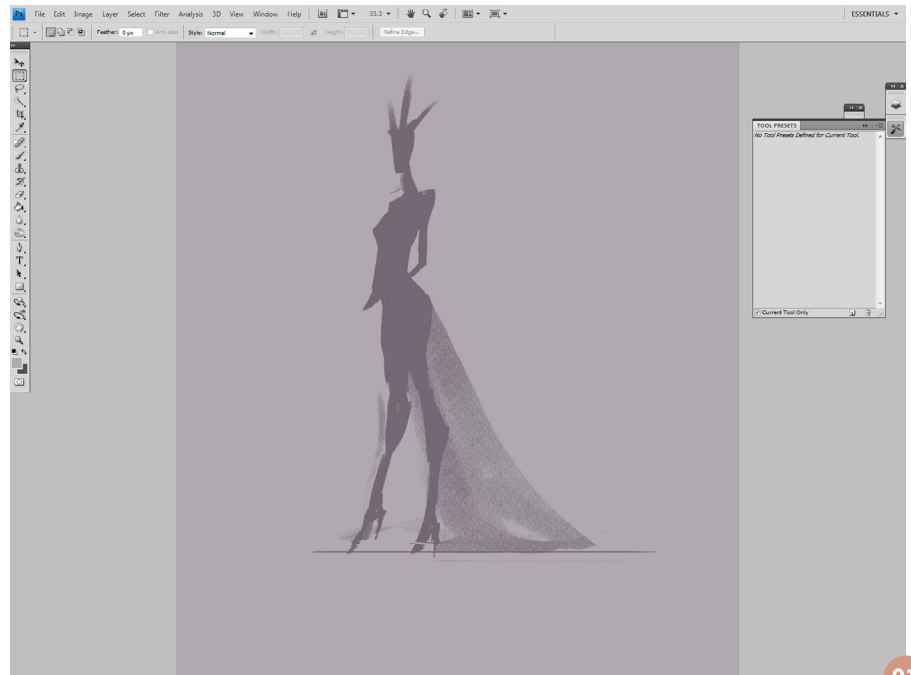
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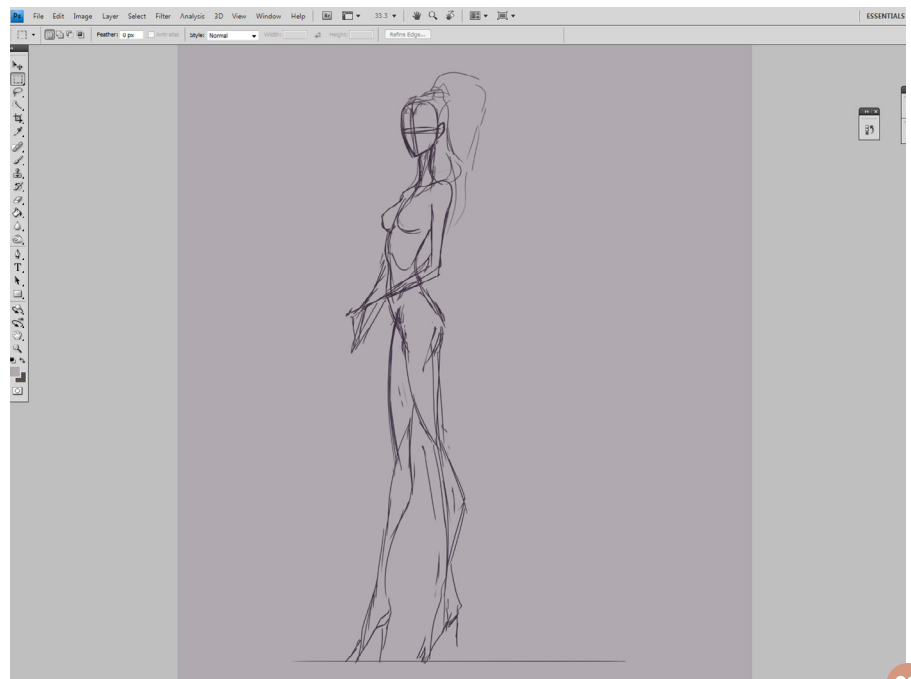
02

allows for the sustainability of larger and more powerful bodies. In just the past hundred years, the human race has grown several inches due to the spread of world wealth.

With this information, ideas about shape begin to form, and I start doing thumbs of tall, elegant figures. I prep with a canvas 4000 pixels tall on a neutral toned background. I use a palette-knife like brush to get quick, solid forms.

02 **Crystallizing ideas:** I sketch what I'm thinking. I use just a hard round, pressure opacity brush for my sketch work. Although humans have grown considerably in history,

we also have become physically weaker as the value of intelligence began to surpass brawn. My decidedly female figure ends up being tall and lithe, with a poised stance. I want to show something regal about this character in the way she stands, maybe even a little pompous. ▶

01 **The important first step is to just get marks on paper so you can start thinking about them!**

02 **This silhouette represents my favorite thumb, omitting details of the clothes**

03 **Heads up:** Now for the face! While human brains did grow larger as we developed past our primate cousins, the most recent trend shows that our brains have actually been shrinking (in theory, because they are becoming more efficient). Although we may have increased intelligence due to better education and nutrition, the caricature of the gigantic throbbing brain would not be accurate. Our faces have also become flatter and our features larger to become more readable. I imagine the result if these trends were to continue, and draw her skull reasonably sized with prominent features.

04 **Fill it:** I use the Lasso tool to fill in her basic silhouette. I adjust her body language to have a hand on her hip and be slightly turning towards the audience to address them in an indirect way. I assume an entirely wealthy culture would become intensely competitive in the way an aristocrat or socialite would be. Everyone would project an image of themselves for others; trying to seem more powerful, popular, secure or interesting than the other wealthy people around them. My goal is to give her an air of confidence through her expression, poise and stance.

05 **Rendering:** I adjust the skin tone to be a little lighter since I plan to pattern it later, and I start working in some basic shadows. It is important that the character is thin (to still look long) but not gaunt or unhealthy looking. I make her exaggerated in her lankiness in order to push my point.

I don't feel that I am trying to make her appealing just for modern viewers; there could be a completely different idea of what is appealing in the future, much like how ideal women were once depicted as rounded figures and have changed
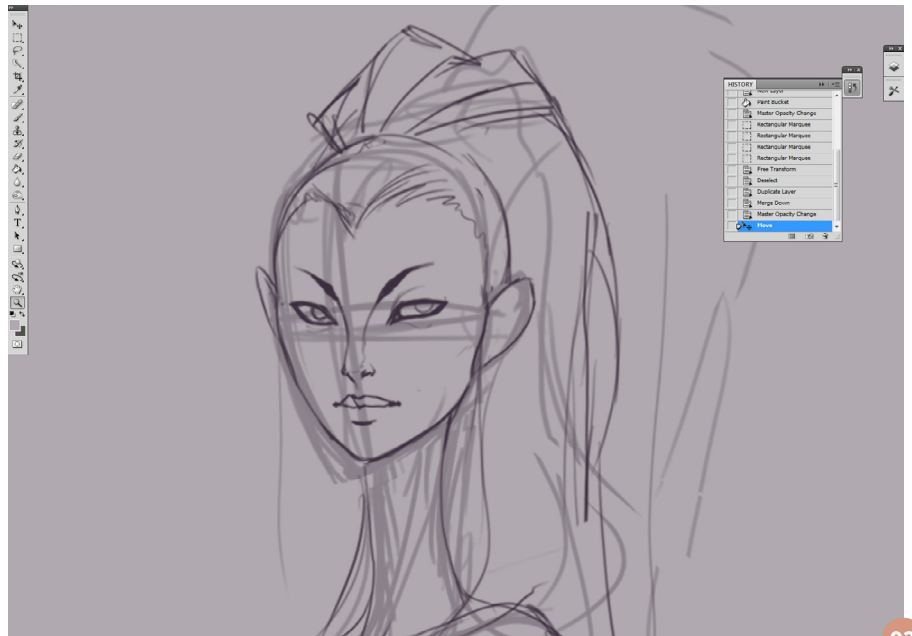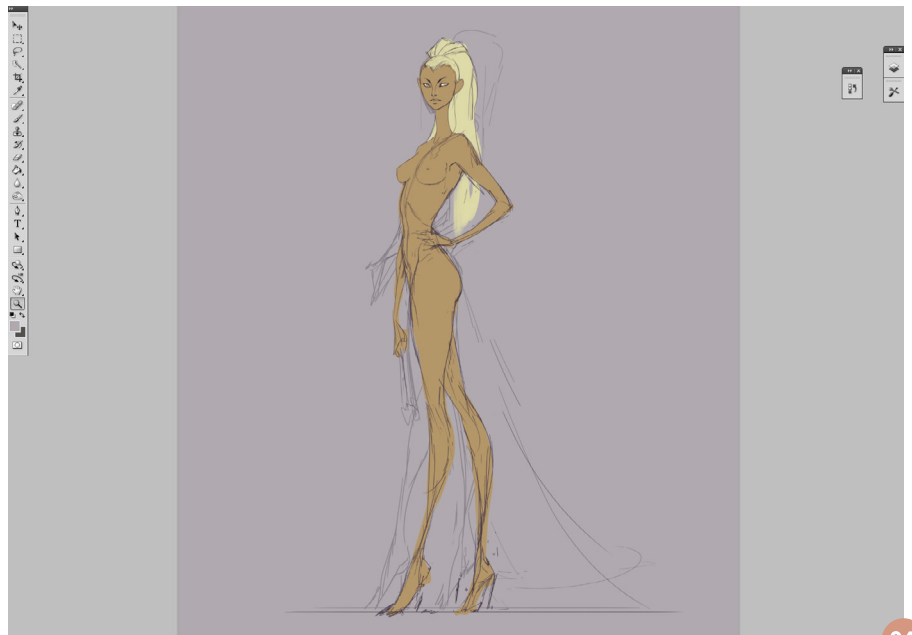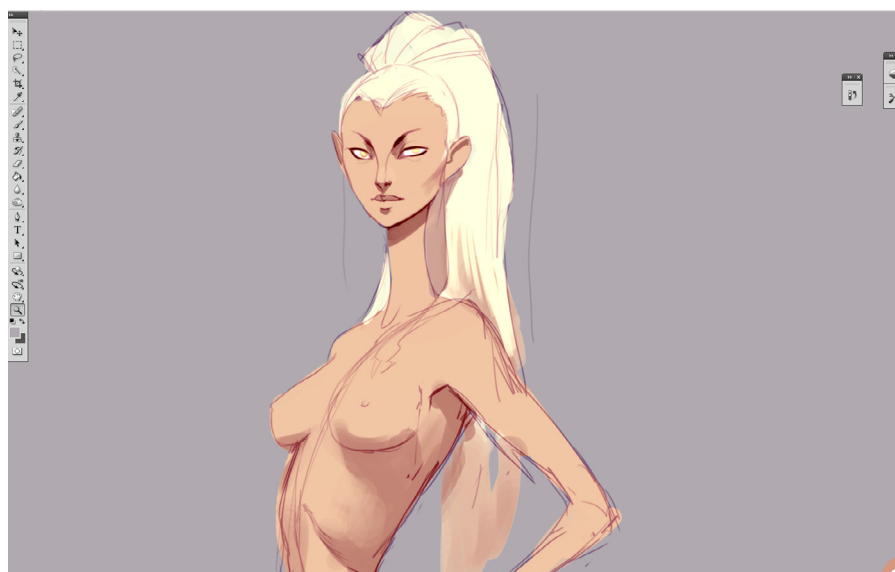
⚡ PRO TIP

All about the story

Start with strong ideas before you even begin a concept. It doesn't have to be elaborate; it just has to be clear and concise. The more complex your story, the more complex your character will be to execute on. Illustration is ultimately about expressing your ideas to other people; test others to see if they can read the same story from your character that you want them to see. This will help put in to perspective what you need to do to make your design clearer.

over time. Maybe in this future, being incredibly elongated is actually attractive, or maybe even the norm?

06 **Diving in:** I start focusing on the face even more. Character's faces are incredibly important to me; they can convey a lot about the mental state of the character through expression and contrast to body language. Human faces have become flatter, noses smaller and eyes larger; we are essentially starting to have more childlike features as we domesticate ourselves into becoming social creatures.

I begin to think about other ways human bodies can alter; what about gene therapy? Could humans begin to alter themselves, say the color of their eyes, in order to be cosmetically appealing? Could the impact of these changes result in an evolutionary divergence over time? This opens me up to a lot more options.

07 **Fleshed out:** I'm starting to get a good idea of what her anatomy should be and begin to refine her tone. She takes on an elfin appearance, a result of her tall, idealistic forms. I can't decide what her footwear will be yet, but I do know that some sort of supports to make her taller would probably be appropriate. In a culture where power, confidence and sex rule, lengthening the figure in an elegant way would support this image.

08 **Getting wild:** Now I've started to really delve into the fantasy aspect of this character. The aristocratic world I created for this character is very competitive when it comes to attention, and these humans will do anything to raise the bar and become more interesting than ▶

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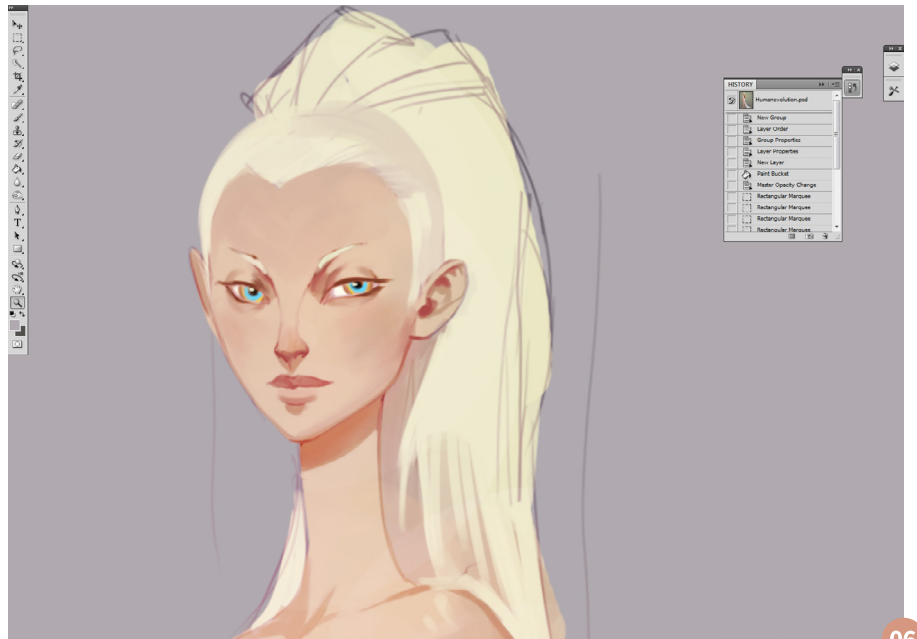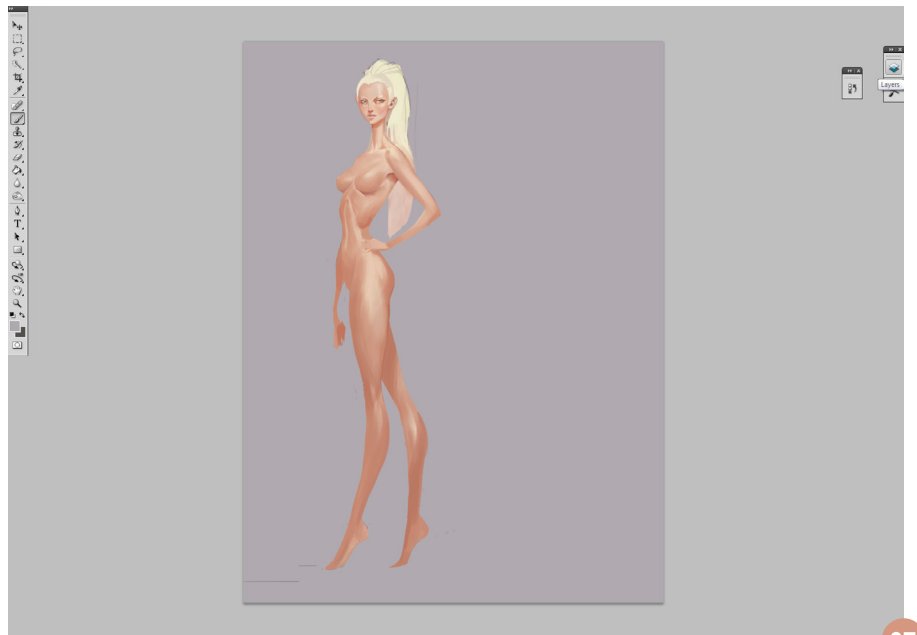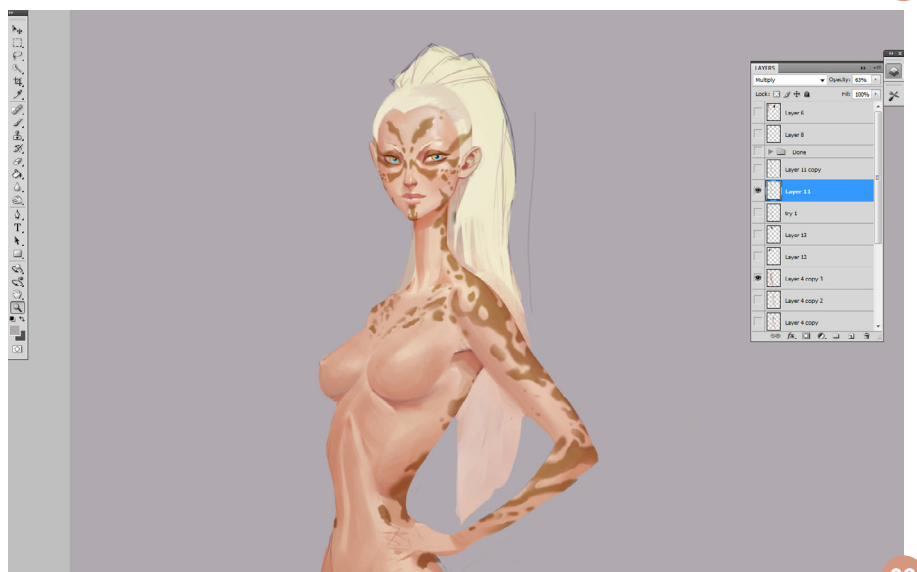
03 She has a slightly judging but calm expression on her face, to make her feel disconnected from the audience

04 Using a higher contrast tone in the beginning helps define the silhouette

05 The skin will be detailed later so shading is kept to a minimum

06 The character is given an unusual eye color combination to give them intensity

07 Her nose and cheeks are more saturated to indicate blush – genetic adaptation, no makeup required!

08 Areas of interest are accentuated by the markings

> ## "Clothes would predominantly be used to accentuate beauty rather than be used for survival or function"

their rivals. I play with the idea of gene therapy that allows humans to once again have markings on their bodies like our animal ancestors, making individuals strikingly different and unique. I look at the patterns of wild cats, dogs and primates to make something that appears natural. I also look at skin pigmentation disorders to see how patterns naturally affect human skin.

**09** **Cover up:** Time to start putting clothes on this figure. Much like on the red carpet, clothes would predominantly be used to accentuate beauty rather than be used for survival or function. Since I am already using her body markings to draw attention, I keep the dress very simple so as not to compete, but provide more of a silhouette to her otherwise slim figure. I want her to feel inaccessibly elite like a celebrity or runway model, and the clothes need to reflect this idea.

Her dress becomes a train that trails behind her, resting on her hips to give them more weight. Often the principles that apply to fashion will also apply to character and costume design in terms of balancing a form, so try to branch out if possible and read up on other artistic disciplines to inform your work!

10 **Bling!** Now for the accessories. I feel like it would help to show some expensive-looking jewelry, which is a clear costume decision to convey a sense of wealth. I use bright, precious metal colors and an exotic hue in the stones to compliment the color of her eyes. Again, I can't let the accessorizing compete with the patterns of her skin; if they look too similar in density, tone or shape, they may be confused with each other.

It is important to keep track of these small details in the larger picture to see how much they impact the overall image. If they're not very visible, they're not worth being there. If they start to take attention away from your focal point, than knock it back.

11 **Polish:** Wrapping up the design, I add one more strange detail to the feet; I extend her pinky toes far off to the side in order to give them the appearance that they are acting as extra support. What if gene therapy allowed us to get the same look of heels without having to wear them?
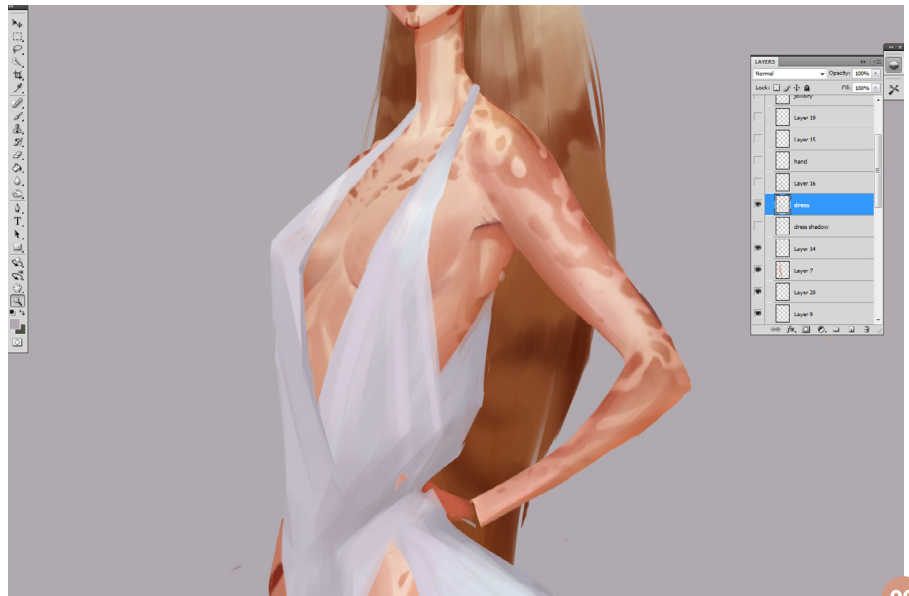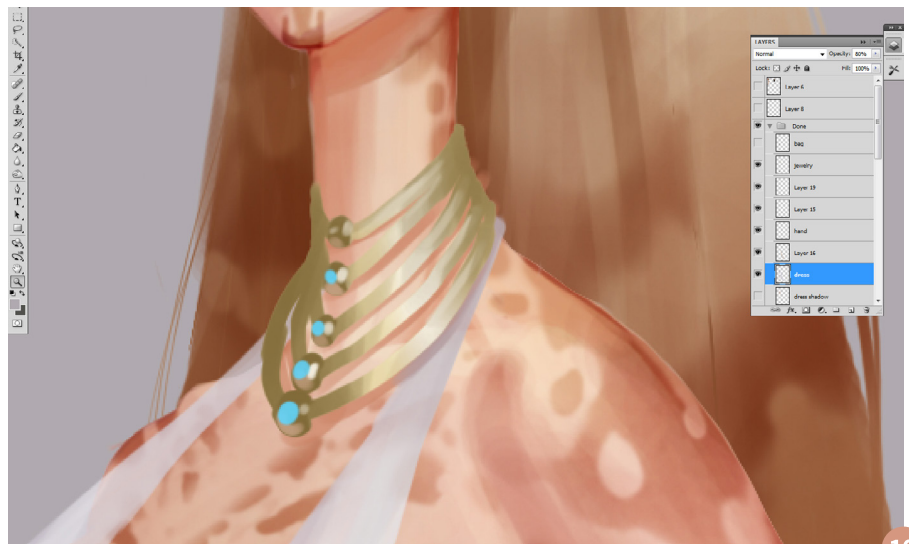
⚡ PRO TIP
Painting yourself into a box
Be careful not to over-think tiny details in your image; try to look at the bigger picture – perhaps something that seems isolated is wrong because of a much larger issue with your painting. If you don't catch big issues in the beginning, it can lead to a chain of events that may lead to more problems. Don't be afraid to make changes! All the adjustments you do are part of the development process. If you're not making mistakes, you're not learning from them.

This is probably the most exaggerated adaptation I've given her, a modification that seems extreme but isn't really when compared to how we mutilate our bodies in pop culture in the name of trends. Rhinoplasty, breast augmentation and facial reconstruction are all ways celebrities adapt their bodies to survive in their environment due to the pressures of society. If we learn to adjust our bodies through gene therapy, we would probably start heading down the route of cosmetic alterations rather quickly. ●

09 The same brush is used in a different manner in order to show the fabric folds
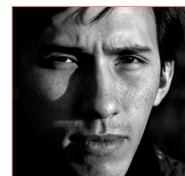
10 Repetition in forms can be boring unless you treat them as pattern language

11 Small details like rendering the cast shadows of the fabric can help unify your image

The Artist

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Issue 095 | November 2013

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32 pages of tutorials inside!

Paint epic cities

YongSub Noh shares advice and techniques on how to concept and create a fantasy industrial building in Photoshop

Learn character painting techniques

Create matter-mutating character concepts with Christopher Peters, from thumbnails, material studies through to texturing and lighting

Depict a heavy duty battle scene

Carlos Cabrera leads you a step-by-step guide to creating a believable battle scene with easy-to-follow Photoshop techniques

Sketching inspiration: Wojciech Ostrycharz

With clients such as Ubisoft and Warner Bro's this sketchbook boasts a diverse range of characters, environments and a whole host of other game-based content

Create texture and paint materials

Romanov Pavel shares advice and the techniques he used to paint materials on his character concept, Warrior of Valhalla

plus

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The Artist

Romanov Pavel
Web: http://cynic.cghub.
com/images
Software Used:
Photoshop

Romanov Pavel started
painting from an early age,
using films as inspiration
for his works. After getting
a computer and studying
Photoshop and Maya, Pavel
worked at **www.wargaming.
net** as a texture artist,
and has since worked as a
freelancer on games such
as *Legend of the Cryptids*,
Impact of Gods, and *Legends
of Eisenwald*.

Create texture and paint materials

Freelance illustrator, Romanov Pavel, takes us through his process of creating a menacing, brutal warrior. He shares advice and the techniques he used to paint materials and create the character concept for his image, *Warrior of Valhalla* ▶

Romanov Pavel demonstrates how to paint materials in the following project overview…

I will break down the process for creating my image, *Warrior of Valhalla*. The task was simple; I wanted to create the image of a brutal warrior, a real man, moody, menacing and powerful. Because I like to create characters, I decided to focus on creating an interesting armor and face.

01 **A quick sketch:** First, I put on my headphones and turned on some music to create the right atmosphere. To start creating the sketch, I specified the mass of elements in the foreground and background. I always make my very first sketches in black and white, but then immediately turn on the color. This was difficult to work with at first, but now it's really easy.

And with that, the draft was ready and I could begin the fun part – adding the detail. This stage was the most exciting, because I needed to include fantasy in full. In this case, I did it without reference and just gave freedom to my imagination. (I was only able to do this though because I have drawn a lot of armor in the past!)

"Flowing hair added some dynamics to the scene"

02 **The character's face:** Now the face! Because of the nature of the character, I decided it should not be cute and clean-shaven. I sketched in a long mat of hair, a bushy mustache and beard. These attributes brought to mind the real brave signs of a northerner who has sailed on a Drakkar to distant shores in an itch to gain wealth and fight brutal battles with dangerous enemies, solely for the sake of the beautiful songs that will glorify his strength and courage.

I started drawing the face; a large nose, wide eyes and a furrowed brow with a couple of scars. Flowing hair added some dynamics to the scene.

03 **Background color:** I then introduced color to the background. I portrayed the entire background in warm colors to contrast with the cold shine of the metal. I drew the bright sun ▶
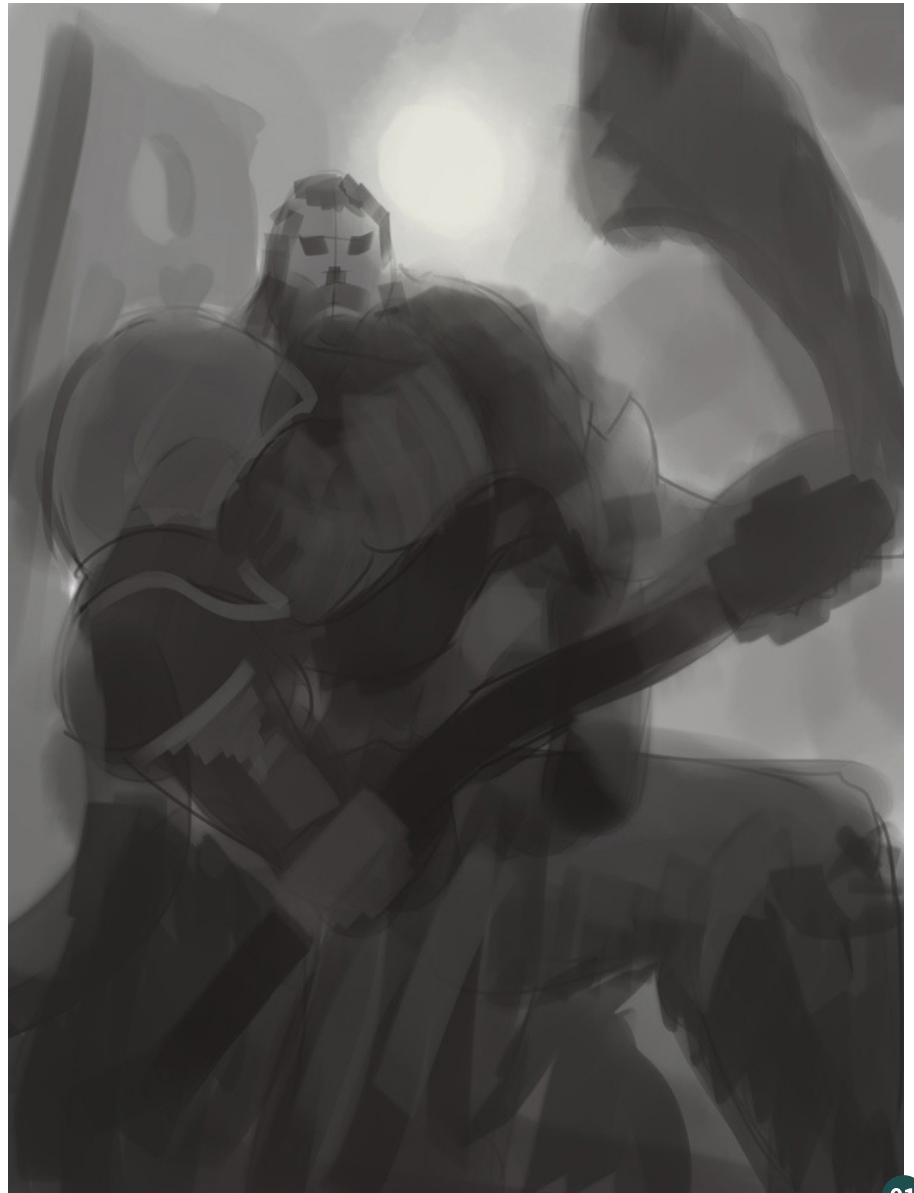
01 Getting down the basic shapes in black and white

02 Giving the character appropriate characteristics

01

02

"The axe in his hand was exaggerated, but still made to fit to his hands - it should aesthetically conform to its owner"

as though it was close to dusk, and so painted in a light haze. Behind the character stands a wall which remained from the ruined castle. I then added some rough indications of armor and ornaments.

04 **Weapon and armor:** The next step was to create a more detailed drawing. I specified the individual ornaments, added highlights on the metal, armor and belts, and sketched in the fur skins that serve him as a cloak. I highlighted the color of the armor using the color gradient layer effect: Darken.

The axe in his hand was exaggerated and over-sized, but still made to fit his hands – it should aesthetically conform to its owner. In keeping with the character, this is a dangerous weapon, used to fight hundreds of enemies and so should reflect this in its appearance, with chips, scratches, and an uneven color of metal.

05 **The light source:** I then created a glow from the light source behind my character. First, I drew in the source of the light – in this case, it was the sun – in a separate background layer.

In another layer, I painted in the light with a soft brush (as in Step 02) and then assigned the Hard Light layer effect and adjusted the color and transparency.

03

04
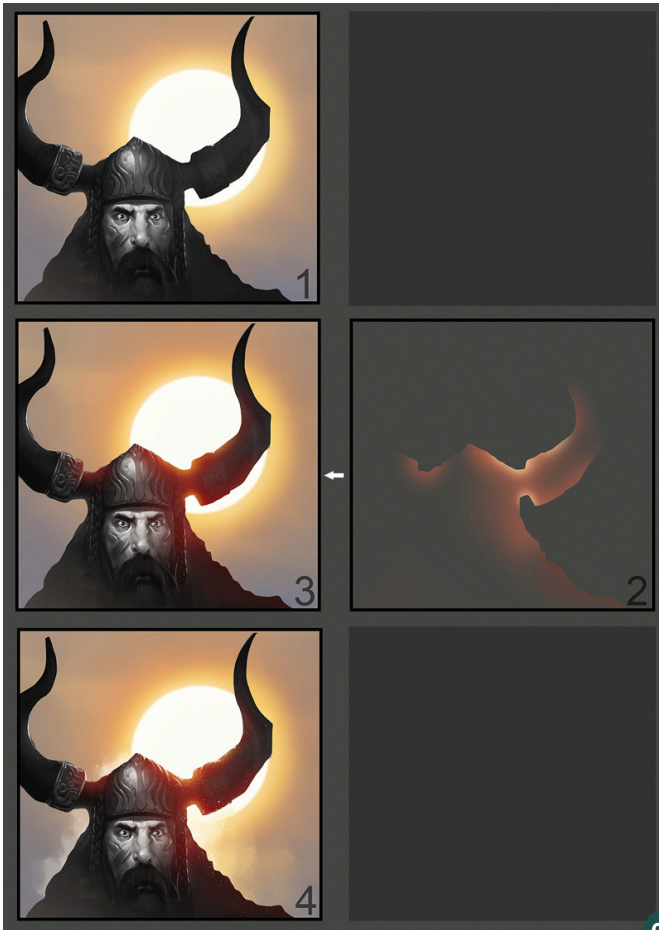
05

06

Then I drew glare in places with texture brush particles and added puffs of steam/evaporation behind the character.

06 **Magic smoke:** Next, I went back to the character itself. With the help of Smoke brushes, I separated the character from the boat by adding some smoke behind the character.

07 **Horned helmet:** At this stage, I decided to add to his warrior helmet. A kind of popularized impression of a Viking, but since I have a fantasy character without a hint of realism, I gave myself a bit of freedom and used the usual clichés. I was still undecided about the axe though, as I didn't like the hilt. ▶

03 A rough pre-textured idea of the scene

04 Before and after the weapon and armor adjustments

05 Creating the sunlight and glare effect on the character

06 Creating depth in the scene using smoke brushes

07 Sketching out and texturing the popular Viking helmet

07

> "Personally, I do not have any clever tricks, everything I create is achieved through constant practice"

**08** **Creating chainmail and texture:** There are many ways you can create chainmail, but this is the method I used. First, I created a brush with the parameters shown in the screenshot. I gave the chainmail a dark background and placed the chainmail patterned brush in rows to emphasize the volumes of the body on which it hung.

Then, in a separate layer, I added a dirty texture. As the chainmail metal had a cool hue, I gave the dirt a warm hue and painted in areas on the rings that receive more light to create a beautiful glare. It was very easy to go overboard here, but I added these glares in moderation.

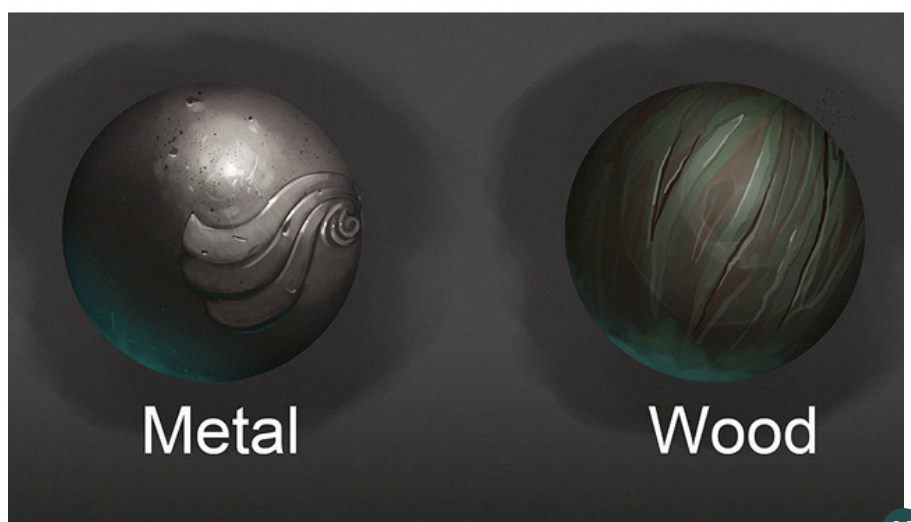I also painted in textures of wood and metal.

09 **Details, details, details:** At the last stage, I added chips, scratches and particles. And I was finished!

Overall, I was pleased with the results, though there are some places that could have been given more attention, such as the background. I get so much inspiration from studying the works of great artists such as Ilya Repin, Ivan Shishkin, Edmund Blair Leighton, John Everett Millais and many others. I also admire many CG artists, each with their own individual style. Personally, I do not have any clever tricks, everything I create is achieved through constant practice – so I advise drawing a lot and everywhere! Be sure to use references to try and understand your subjects; such as how they exist, how they work and what patterns they possess. ●
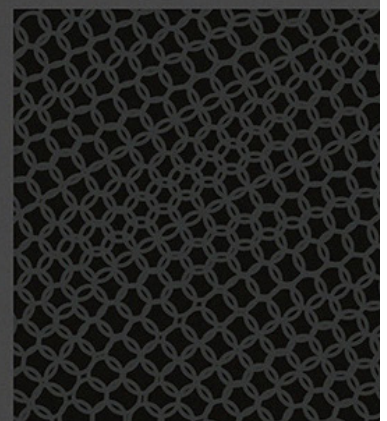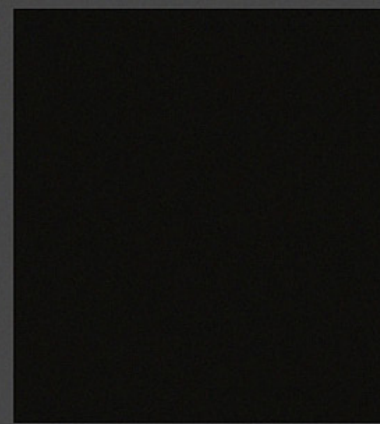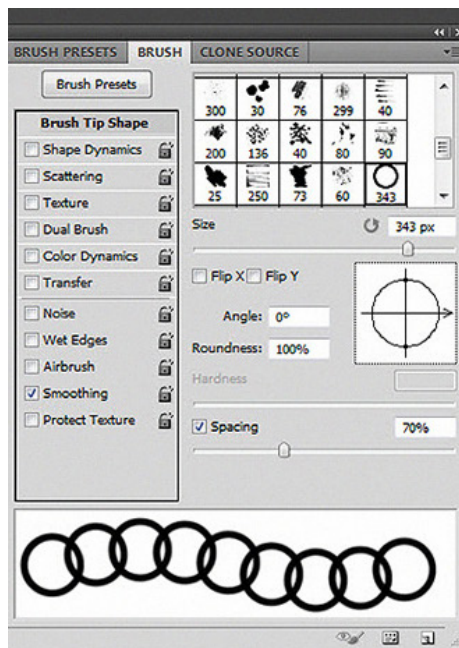
08 Adding subtle textured highlights to chainmail gives a great effect

09 The final image

Metal

Wood

The Artist

Romanov Pavel
Web: http://cynic.cghub.
com/images

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The Artist

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com
Software Used:
Photoshop

Byzwa Dher is from Slovakia
and currently works as a
freelance digital artist. His
main focus is in concept art
and illustration for characters
and environment.

Speed paint fantasy scenes

Byzwa Dher applies speed-painting techniques to his fairy-tale inspired fantasy in order to capture the atmosphere in quick smart time! ▶

Discover Byzwa Dher's speed painting techniques in the following project overview...

In this process, I focused on creating a scene with a mixture of fairytale and fantasy. While creating this particular imagine I was short on time, so I was certain a speed-painting technique was the way to go. When speed-painting, the picture is created very quickly, and it mainly captures the atmosphere I'm trying to create. Allow me to guide you through the process I used.

01 Idea draft: The aim of this picture was to show a significant contrast of size, which in this case would be the ratio of something huge compared with something completely tiny. In addition to this, I wanted to add a story and atmosphere to the picture.

After a little bit of thinking, I came up with an idea of a giant and a small boy in a fairytale atmosphere. The giant wasn't intended to appear hostile but rather friendly. I decided to add a little bit of action by hiding the giant behind a massive hill to guide the viewer's imagination towards making their own story. I started with a quick composition draft to put down the idea, which took me just a few minutes. For this step I used a default hard brush with opacity pressure.

02 Composition: In this step, I prepared the canvas with a little more detail. For separation, I used the composition rule of thirds. Imagine breaking an image down into thirds (both horizontally and vertically) so that you get nine parts. According to this rule there are points of interest at the areas where the lines intersect, in which to insert main objects that are supposed to attract the viewer's interest. I chose a diagonal layout to simulate a view into space from one point into another. I lay out the depth of the picture as foreground/FG, middle-ground/MG, background/BG and finally I added sky as the fourth layer.

03 Color scheme: I chose the colors of daylight as the main color scheme for the picture – mainly a warm source of light which showed cold tones in the shadows. So I chose one cold blue tone and one warm orange ▶
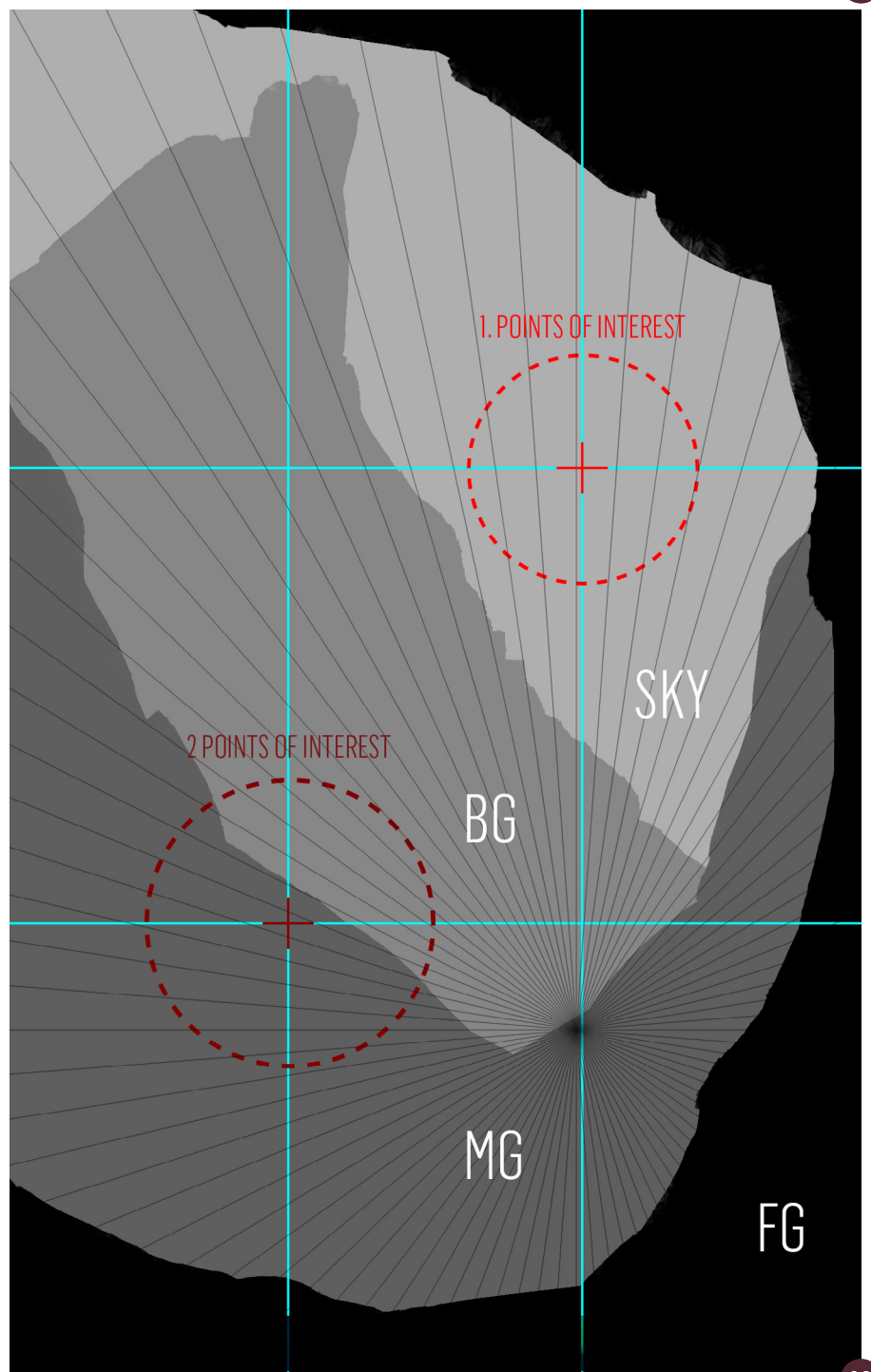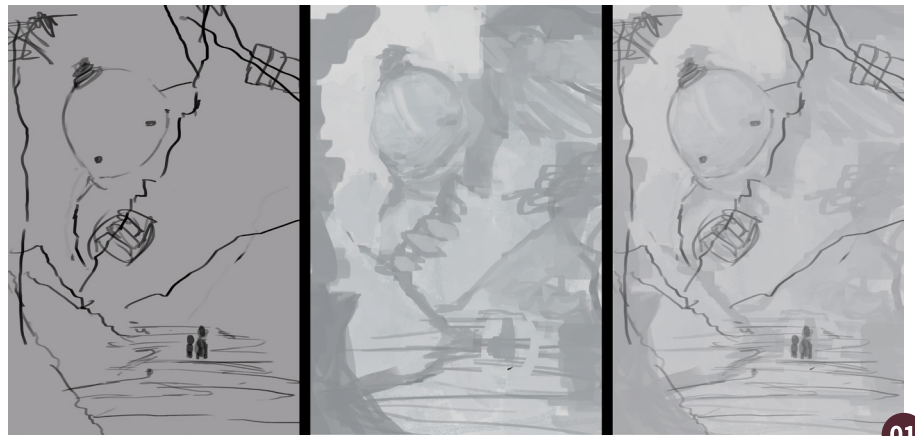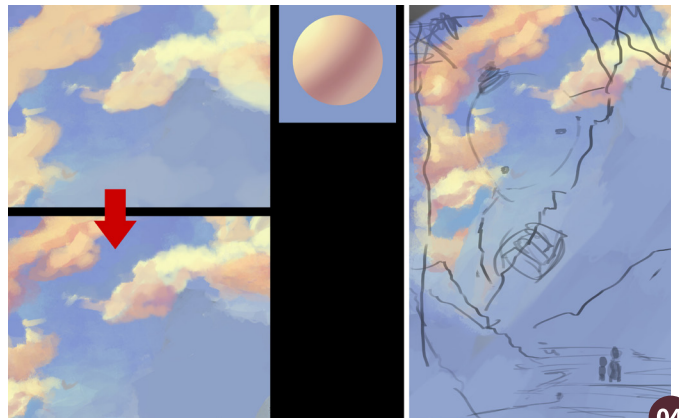
01 This outline draft shows the basic composition, adding light color values

02 Composition showing the separation of areas in the image

01

1. POINTS OF INTEREST

2 POINTS OF INTEREST

SKY

BG

MG

FG

02

03

04

05
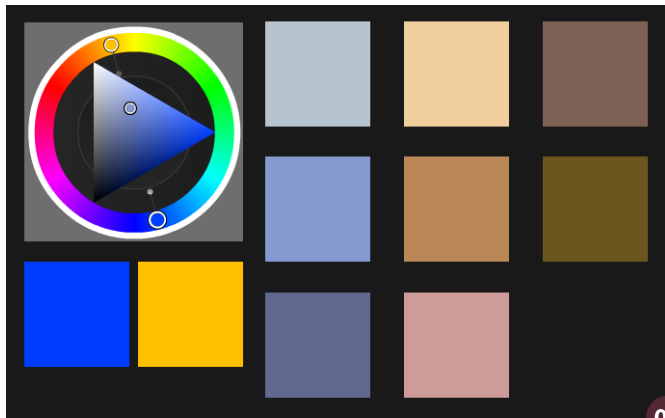
> **"The whole picture was in the blue/orange tone so I can't forget to work in nature tones, with green parts of trees etc. "**

shade from the color spectrum – these colors are complementary colors. From these colors I created many shades for the ground, sky and hills by setting up value and saturation.

04 **Sky:** Personally I prefer to start from the background in environmental concepts. As I mentioned, my first goal was to draw day-sky on a sunny day. I filled in the canvas with light blue from the color scheme and outlined the shapes of clouds with a light orange.

I was using Photoshop spatter brushes with opacity control. I've grown to like them because they have the trait of classic painting techniques. I toned the individual shapes with colors for bright places, mid-tones and cloud shadows; as is visible on the ball in the image.

05 **Hills:** Hills are a part of the middle-ground in this image. I maintained the law of atmospheric perspective here, which states that the mountains in the distance are surrounded by atmosphere so they gain the colors of the sky, and they also lack the detail of the middle-ground mountains.

I proceeded in the same way as the sky. First of all I outlined the shapes of the mountain and drew details into the clipping layer; bright points and shadows. I used shape overlay with photo texture to speed up the process in connection with blending mode, overlay, multiply and soft light. The picture grew new details and color tones which I gradually finished up.

06 **Ground:** I used an equivalent technique as the mountains to create the illusion of ground, as I planned out a pathway on which the second character enters the picture. I outlined the shape of the pathway and worked out the details
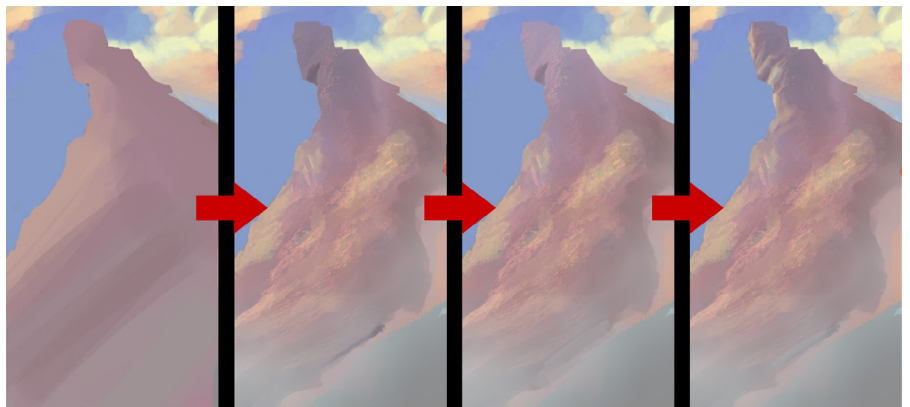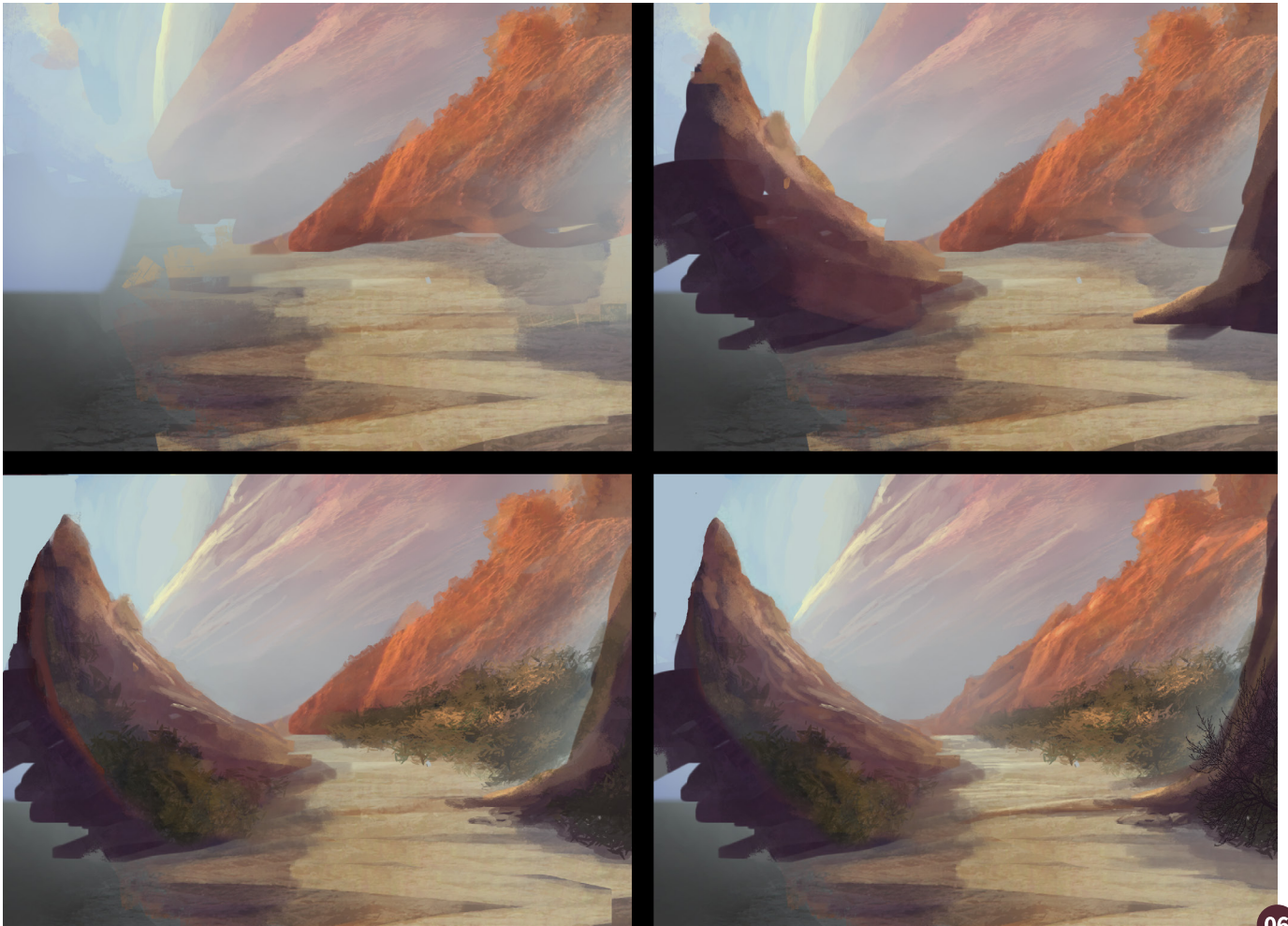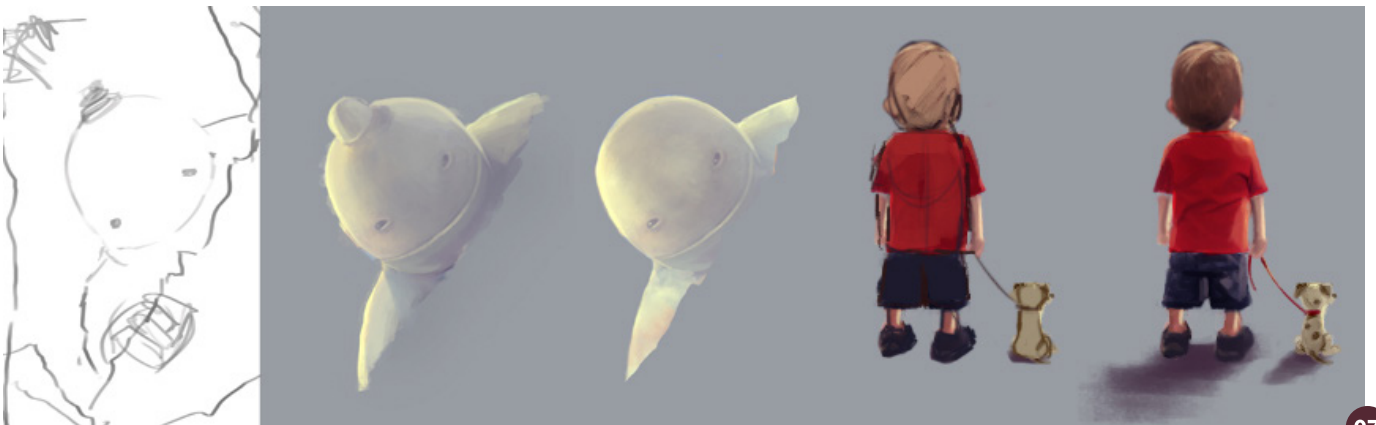
using the texture overlay. The whole picture was in the blue/orange tone so I couldn't forget to work in natural tones, with green for foliage etc. I added bush shapes and a tree that I painted with green and brown to revive the image. To achieve volume, I made the shaded the mountainside on the ground as well as in lighted places.

07 **Details:** In this step I was able to focus on the characters.

The giant: I pictured him as something huge created from geometric shapes from the very beginning, so the whole look of the giant is made from simple round shapes. I pointed out the friendly personality of the giant by giving him a big smile. I shaded the main shapes based on the light falling on them from the side.

I did the same with the boy character; I created a more detailed form from the basic layout.

That's when I decided to add in a third character. A little dog which strengthens the story of the picture – where the boy makes a new BIG friend on a casual walk. To position the giant behind the mountain better I added in his hand. ▶

08

09

10

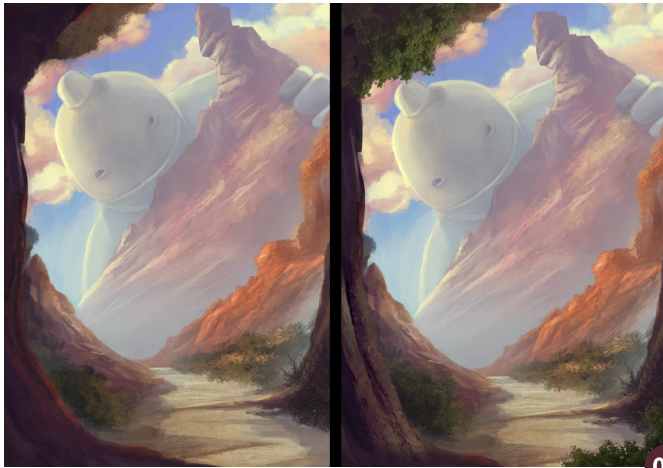**08** **Foreground:** Trees and bushes are also elements of the foreground. Since they are in the foreground, they need a higher amount of detail. I followed the same technique of texturing and followed the lighting as a guide.

09 **Color correction:** The picture was nearly completed, and my final step was the color correction of the whole picture. I didn't use anything special, just the curves and color balance which are a great tool to revive the colors in shadows and light parts. I came to the conclusion that the picture worked better when it was flipped horizontally. As the next step, I added some mist around the giant to highlight its mightiness.

10 **Final touches:** For the final piece of the puzzle, I added birds around the mountains and highlights using warm color from the source of light to indicate 'heavenly' rays. The birds revived the picture and added a dynamic touch. I highlighted the colors with a final color balance, brightness and contrast adjustment. I also used smart Sharpen Filters to sharpen the image and to outline the brush moves.

Creating such scenes from my mind is great fun for me and speed-painting is the tool that allows me to visualize such environments perfectly. I hope that the technique I introduced in this tutorial will be as exciting and interesting for you as it is for me. I'm sure it can be very helpful in creating your future speed-paints. ●

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08 Foreground detailing

09 Color correction

10 Final touches

The Artist
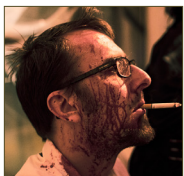
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Software Used:
Photoshop
Bio:
Loic e338 Zimmermann is a
French visual artist based in
Los Angeles who's worked
on such films as *Thor* and
Iron Man 3. He's also been
developing his own body of
work and has been part of
numerous exhibitions over
the past decade.

DIGITAL ART MASTER:
Billy the Kid
by Loïc Zimmermann

With over a decade of experience in the industry, we are in the safe hands of Loïc
e338 Zimmermann, as he takes us through his process of creating 'Billy the Kid', and
teaches us how it is important to choose good coffee! ▶

Introduction

If Billy the Kid, by Sam Peckinpah, is now considered to be a classic of the genre, in my opinion it has very little to do with the original script! It was totally surreal and based on some strange historical events. If Pat Garrett shot and killed Billy the Kid, how come he was found dead with his brain missing and traces of deep bites and scratches all over his body? And why was the floor covered in mashed-potatoes? To me this information seemed obscure or incomplete, and as I like my images to be grounded in robust fact I decided to depict what seems to be the most rational explanation as to what happened to Billy the Kid – he was actually ambushed by a horde of zombie potatoes!

At the same time as I was thinking about Billy's story, I was reading a book about composition and storytelling, devouring page after page. In my 'to-do list' for 2011 there was 'characters in action' written down. Yeah, I like portraits and I have done quite a few of them, but often my subjects are standing still, so I wanted to see if I could attempt to paint some action and dynamic chaos for a change! These were the things that I wanted to translate into this specific illustration.

Design

Bob Dylan created the soundtrack for the aforementioned movie and also had a little part in it. I thought it could be cool to use him as a reference for Billy. Also Bob's real surname is the same as mine! Some might argue that the character looks a little too cool for the desperate situation he is in, but I thought it helped establish a strong contrast with the rage (fairly typical) of the potatoes. The outfit is simple (as it is for most of my characters). I don't like to overdo the clothing; the more casual the better as far as I'm concerned (**Fig.01**).

The potatoes!

In terms of the simple design, I came up with the idea of using potatoes as the evil opponents after thinking about some of the groups that Hollywood have forced together to keep us all entertained in the past. Cowboy Vs Potatoes – sounds like a hit!

Since the idea was to have a bunch of characters in the frame, it made sense to keep things simple. I chose to use the same design for all of the potatoes, with only minor variations here and there. This way, they appear as a group and as a single fighting entity! As far as design goes they're pretty much the opposite of Billy, which is a good way to establish who's who (**Fig.02**).

Composition

Look at the image (**Fig. 03**) – what do we have? There is basically a diagonal line that cuts the screen in half.

That diagonal line is actually going down, which is funny because so is our hero. The density is higher on the left where the enemies are standing and it gradually decreases as it gets closer to the hero. There is also an indication that other characters are coming in from the right-hand side and from the distance too, which leads us to believe that Billy is completely surrounded and is in real trouble! ▶
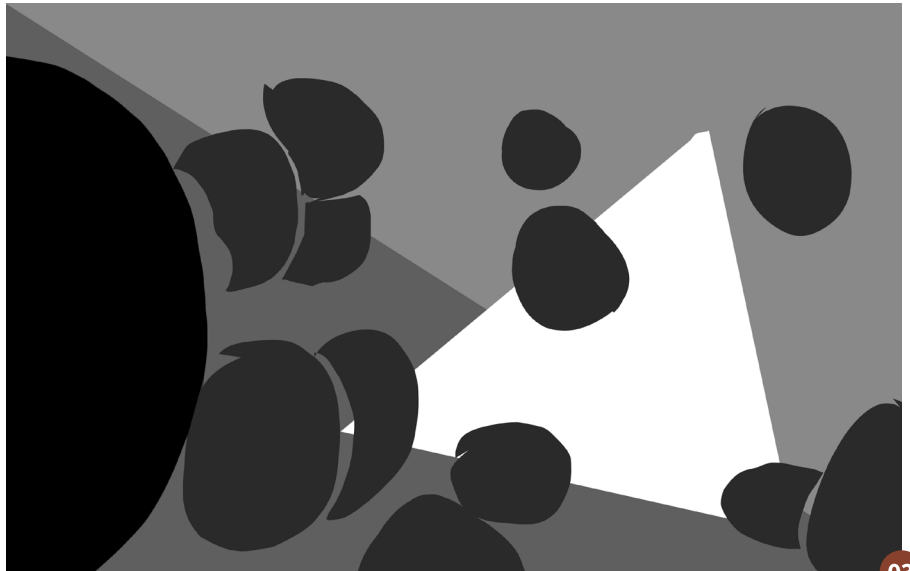
Establishing the foreground via an extreme close-up on one of the zombies adds depth to the scene, while giving the audience a little more information regarding the creepy nature of those guys. It took me a while to find a good balance with this guy actually. He's the only one that seems to see us, which makes you ask the question, "Are we intruding or are we part of the horde?" (**Fig.04**).

To contrast with the overall round shape of the zombies, I made their arms very thin, bright and sharp. They look menacing and are all pointing at the character, if not grabbing him already, which creates tension. Again, I was trying to establish a relationship between Billy and his opponents by having the audience look back and forth between them (**Fig.05**).

Hues
Still using the composition diagonal, I darkened the left side of the screen while keeping the right side brighter (**Fig.06**). The zombies have

dark outfits (pants, boots and hats) and red noses. Sticking to this principle makes it easier to read the image and identify the protagonists, even the ones lost in depth. The color red acts as something to grab your attention and since the only other major element in the image that contains that color is the hero's pants, it establishes an additional connection between Billy and the zombies.

Custom tools, custom what?
Earlier this year I swore to a friend that I'd never talk about custom tools and brushes again. For this image I used very basic tools as well as some of the classic Ditlev brushes to develop the painting (**Fig.07**). Another important thing to consider when working on this kind of project is to have a good chair, and one should always take a lot of care when choosing coffee!

Conclusion
The process of sketching the idea through to detailing the final illustration was really fun. The

response I had to the image was a reward in itself! Whilst working I ask myself these questions to help me understand what I'm painting and why: What's happening? Does it read well? Do I need this? Should I keep that? Would it be better with this, or without that?

I didn't only want the audience to smile when looking at this image, but I also wanted people to come back and feel compelled to check what's going on and look more carefully, revealing details and the story in the image. To achieve this you need to establish priorities in the things you want to say with your work, otherwise you may end up with something impossible to read and too confusing to attract anyone. ●

The Artist

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